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Security Council

Provisional

Fifty-third Year

3900th Meeting
Tuesday, 30 June 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Monteiro	(Portugal)
Members:	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Amorim
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Costa Rica	Mr. Sáenz Biolley
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Essonghé
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Japan	Mr. Owada
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	Sweden	Mr. Dahlgren
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

The situation in the occupied Arab territories

Letter dated 23 June 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/558)

98-85546 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the occupied Arab territories

Letter dated 23 June 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/558)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Bangladesh, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Norway, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gold (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Hossain (Bangladesh), Mr. García (Colombia), Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba), Mr. Elaraby (Egypt), Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia), Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Hasan (Iraq), Mr. Abu-Nimah (Jordan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon), Mr. Rastam (Malaysia), Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania), Mr. Snoussi (Morocco), Mr. Kolby (Norway), Mr. Al-Sameen (Oman), Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar), Mr. Al-Ahmed (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Hachani (Tunisia), Mr. Samhan Al-Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 26 June 1998 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/1998/587 and which reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, to participate in the upcoming meeting of the Security Council on Tuesday, 30 June 1998, with regard to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the current debate in accordance with the rules of procedure and previous practice in this regard.

There being on objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 29 June 1998 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which reads as follows:

"In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to request to participate, under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, in the debate relating to the decision of the Government of Israel to expand the physical and administrative structure of Jerusalem."

On previous occasions, the Security Council has extended invitations to representatives of other United Nations bodies in connection with the consideration of matters on its agenda. In accordance with past practice in this matter, I propose that the Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 29 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request the Security Council to extend an invitation under rule 39 of the rules of procedure to Mr. Ali Al-Salafi, Chargé d'affaires of the Office of the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to participate in the Security Council's formal open debate on the situation in the occupied Arab territories, which will take place on Tuesday, 30 June 1998."

This letter will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/1998/588. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to His Excellency Mr. Al-Salafi.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to the request dated 23 June 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/558).

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following documents: S/1998/481, S/1998/511, S/1998/535 and S/1998/557, letters dated 8, 15, 18 and 22 June 1998, respectively, from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; and S/1998/579, letter dated 26 June 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Observer of Palestine, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Today is the last day of your presidency this month, Sir, and we consider it fortunate that this important meeting is being held under your presidency, in view of your personal qualities and of the positions of the friendly country of Portugal. Allow me also to extend my thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Njuguna Mahugu, the Permanent Representative of Kenya, with whom we worked last month on the same issue during his presidency of the Council.

The Security Council is meeting today to consider an issue of great importance to us in Palestine, to the Arab and Muslim worlds and to the international community as a whole – namely, the issue of Jerusalem, the Holy City of three monotheistic religions.

Since its inception, the United Nations has dealt with the issue of Jerusalem in a manner commensurate with its importance and reflective of its special status. The United Nations adopted a special international regime — the *corpus separatum* — for the city and later refrained from recognizing the de facto situation resulting from the war of 1948. It then effectively dealt with the occupation resulting from the war of 1967 with the aim of preventing Israel, the occupying Power, from carrying out any measures aimed at changing the legal status or demographic composition of East Jerusalem, as an integral part of the territories occupied since 1967 and to which the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 is applicable. The Security Council has adopted 16 resolutions with regard to Jerusalem, 10 of which were adopted after the occupation of 1967. The Council reaffirmed in these resolutions its rejection of all the Israeli measures, considering them null and void and calling upon Member States not to recognize them and not to move their embassies to Jerusalem.

Thus, there exists what may be considered a clear international consensus concerning the issue of Jerusalem. This position is based upon a deep understanding of the important religious, historical and political factors of this issue. Israel, in return, has taken a position in direct opposition to that of the international community and continues to ignore its will and to violate international law and Security Council resolutions. This position refuses to recognize Palestinian and Arab rights and persists in monopolizing Jerusalem, considering it to be solely Jewish or Israeli. Consequently, such a position negates the possibility of achieving peace and guarantees the continuation of war and hatred in the region.

Over the years, Israel has adopted a number of policies and carried out many measures to impose its position and to create certain facts on the ground. These illegal, appalling and immoral policies and measures include attempts to annex occupied territories, the confiscation of lands, the expansion of the city's municipal boundaries, and the isolation of East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. They also include the influx of 150,000 settlers in an attempt to create a specific demographic composition; legal and de facto discrimination between Jews and non-Jews; and the direct oppression of Palestinian Jerusalemites, the confiscation of their identity cards, the demolition of their homes and preventing them from living in the city of their ancestors.

All of these actions have been repeatedly condemned by the international community, which has refused to recognize their results. All of these actions have been challenged by our people, who have succeeded in thwarting some of the aims of these actions, including the fact that Palestinian Jerusalemites still constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of East Jerusalem within the legal boundaries of the municipality of the city. However, their suffering is immense and their feelings of injustice and pain are immeasurable. These Israeli measures have created and are still creating a situation that could lead to the explosion of the whole region at any moment.

A few years ago the peace process came to the Middle East, along with the Palestinian-Israeli agreements within its framework, according to which the two sides agreed to negotiate the status of Jerusalem in the negotiations on the final settlement. Palestinian Jerusalemites have exercised their rights in participating in the elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council within the Jerusalem electoral district. Furthermore, additional guarantees were given to the Palestinian side with regard to the preservation of the Palestinian institutions in the city. All of this constituted a significant change and was expected to lead to a comprehensive change in Israeli policies and measures with regard to Jerusalem, based upon compliance with the goals of the peace process and the need for all the parties to refrain from creating new facts on the ground that would abort the forthcoming negotiations. This was not completely adhered to by the former Israeli Government, but at least that Government did not comprehensively violate these commitments or undertake measures that could destroy the peace process in its entirety.

When the current Israeli Government came to power, it set us back to the period before the peace process and adopted, carried out and even intensified the aforementioned policies and practices. It opened the tunnel in the vicinity of Al-Haram Al-Sharif, following which the Security Council adopted resolution 1073 (1996). Then it began the construction of a new settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim to the south of occupied Jerusalem, which was the focus of the resolutions of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, which was convened after the Security Council failed twice to adopt a resolution in this regard because of the vetoes exercised by one of its permanent members. This was followed by a series of other illegal Israeli actions, particularly the escalation of settler colonialism inside the Old City in Burj al-Laqlaq and outside it in Ras Al-Amud, Silwan and the Mount of Olives, to which we referred in several letters addressed to this Council.

Lastly, the Israeli Government decided on 21 June 1998 to adopt a plan aimed at strengthening the illegal hold of Israel on Jerusalem. This is the direct reason for the Security Council's meeting today. The plan would expand the municipal boundaries of the city and establish an "umbrella authority" to include a number of illegal settlements in the West Bank. This represents a concrete step towards the illegal annexation of more occupied Palestinian lands to the already illegally expanded Jerusalem municipality in order to maintain a specific demographic composition with the aim of furthering the process of the judaization of the city.

The Israeli Prime Minister said on 18 June 1998, when he was announcing the plan:

> "I think this is a basic change in Jerusalem's status which will be remembered as a turning point." (*S/52/958*)

The Prime Minister also said:

> "The first thing we are doing is to link 'Greater Jerusalem' and the second thing is strengthening the Jewish majority in Jerusalem." (*ibid.*)

With regard to the illegal settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim, he stated:

> "Write it down. You will see houses at 'Har Homa', many houses, by the year 2000." (*ibid.*)

Could there be any more blatant revelation than these outrageous statements of the nature of the plan and its dangerous and malicious goals? This plan constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, several Security Council resolutions, and those of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly. It manifests contempt for the values which these laws and resolutions represent and for the will of the international community and its collective position.

What will the Security Council do in the face of all this? We hope that the Council will have the sufficient will finally to undertake the necessary measures to guarantee the rescinding of this plan and to prevent Israel, the occupying Power, from undertaking any further illegal actions in Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied territories, beginning with the adoption of the draft resolution sponsored by the Arab Group in this regard. We believe that the Council is obligated to do this

in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Here, I will have to recall that the Israeli plan and the other Israeli policies and practices in Jerusalem to which I have referred also gravely violate the agreements reached between the two sides within the framework of the peace process in the Middle East. I said, "I will have to recall" it, because there is not much left of this peace process anyway, thanks to Mr. Netanyahu and his Government. The policies and practices of the Israeli Government not only violate the agreements, but are clearly aimed at the systematic destruction of those agreements and at discarding the entire peace process. It is sufficient to refer to Israel's long-standing rejection of the American proposals aimed at revitalizing this process, which were accepted by the Palestinian side despite our understanding that the proposals are incomparably closer to the Israeli than to the Palestinian position. The Prime Minister and the Israeli Government do not hesitate to use old and new gimmicks in an attempt to cover up the reality of the Israeli position. We see them immersed in coordinated propaganda campaigns to direct accusations against the Palestinian side; we see them invent, for example, the idea of the illegal popular referendum with regard to the recent American proposals; and, finally, there is the idea of a new peace conference -- as if the Israeli side had complied with the results of the first Conference in Madrid in order to discuss another conference. All of this is no longer capable of covering up the reality, and the Israeli plan for Jerusalem is a stark reminder of that reality. This plan constitutes another basic step towards the Israeli Government's final divorce from the peace process.

It is not possible to imagine the peace process being revitalized and continuing, given the existence of such a plan. It is unacceptable for the Israeli violations in Jerusalem to continue, even if there is somehow a sudden Israeli change with regard to the American proposals. For our Palestinian people, Jerusalem is a red line: we cannot give it up. This is a stubborn reality that all the parties need to comprehend.

Israel says that our coming forward to complain to the Security Council violates the existing agreements. That, of course, is a ridiculous claim that does not even deserve to be addressed. But there is another party that says that this action is counter-productive and that consideration by the Council of these Israeli violations will harm the peace process. This is really very unfortunate. How, legally, politically or morally, can anyone say something like that? How can it be said that, despite the responsibilities of the Council in accordance with the Charter, the Council should not intervene in Middle East affairs? How can it be said, in the face not only of Israel's violations of international law and the agreements reached, but of its persistence in these violations, that it will be counter-productive for the Council to deal with this issue? How can it be said that Palestinian complaints about these violations — our mere complaining and seeking to stop violations that were not stopped by the continuous efforts of the sponsors of the peace process — will harm this process? How can anyone make a comparison between actions in violation of international law and the reactions to those actions, which are entirely based on international law? It is unreasonable and unacceptable, and it is our hope that this position will soon be changed, if not for the sake of fairness and credibility, at least for the sake of the Charter and the United Nations.

In spite of everything, the Palestinian people have high hopes that this time all members of the Council will enable the Council to exercise its responsibilities, at least on the basis of an understanding of the great importance of the issue of Jerusalem and the desire to contribute to rescuing the peace process and to preserving the United Nations Charter, international law and Security Council resolutions.

The President: I thank the Permanent Observer of Palestine for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Israel, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Gold (Israel): Fifty years ago the Jewish quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem surrendered. Its Jewish inhabitants were expelled. Fifty-eight synagogues, including the 700-year-old Hurva synagogue, were destroyed and desecrated. Free access of the Jewish people to their holy places, particularly the Western Wall, was denied. Even Israeli Muslims were precluded from gaining access to the mosques of the Old City. During all those years, from 1948 until 1967, the Security Council never met once to consider the denial of Israeli rights or Jewish rights in Jerusalem.

With Jerusalem's reunification, the State of Israel is determined never to let this happen again. Israel's position in Jerusalem is not a product of these recent events alone, but emanates from a continuous historical link between the Jewish people and their eternal capital, which has endured from the Roman destruction of Jerusalem to this century. Equally, the Jewish people's

majority in Jerusalem is not a present-day demographic development, but had already been restored by the middle of the previous century, in 1864, when Jerusalem was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

Today, Israel has a special responsibility to preserve and protect Jerusalem as a city that is holy to each of the great faiths in our region: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Israel undertook in the 1994 Washington Declaration to respect the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the Muslim holy shrines in Jerusalem and to give high priority to this historical role in permanent status negotiations.

Besides safeguarding the access of all faiths to the holy sites, Israel has carefully sought to ensure the development of Jerusalem for all its peoples. While the total population of Jerusalem grew after unification from 266,300 in 1967 to 603,000 in 1996, the Palestinian Arabs did not find themselves losing their relative position in the city. Indeed, if the Palestinians constituted 25.8 per cent of the population in 1967, by 1996 they made up 30 per cent of Jerusalem's population.

Preserving Jerusalem requires planning. Across the Middle East, and in many parts of the world, cities face very different alternative courses of development. Rapid urbanization can overwhelm cities, leading to an exhaustion of all land reserves, as downtown areas become enveloped with shanty towns, substandard housing and increased poverty. Alternatively, cities can lose population: a lack of adequate housing and employment opportunities can force residents to relocate to more prosperous suburban areas, leaving the core city to decay. Indeed, during the period prior to 1967, thousands of Palestinian Arabs left Jerusalem, seeking better opportunities in the city of Amman.

The Government of Israel is determined to protect Jerusalem for all its residents and has therefore taken a ministerial-level initiative to strengthen the city. This is not a new political programme affecting the political status of Jerusalem. This is not a plan to gerrymander district lines in order to affect political outcomes. It consists of a municipal blueprint for bolstering the city's economy and infrastructure. Israel's actions to preserve and protect Jerusalem are fully in accordance with the Interim Agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which provides that Jerusalem remain under exclusive Israeli jurisdiction while remaining an issue for permanent status negotiations. It is for this reason that the Palestinian Authority undertook in the 1997 Note for the Record to close all of its offices in Jerusalem, which is outside of its area of jurisdiction. It is these clear obligations of the Interim Agreement — witnessed by the United States, Russia, the European Union, Norway, Egypt and Jordan — that must provide the basis for gauging the actions of the two sides. These obligations were, after all, freely entered into by the parties and represent binding undertakings.

Security Council debate on any issue must be based on facts and not on unproven political argumentation or claims. It should be recalled that in September 1996 the Security Council was informed that Israel had opened a tunnel under the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Of course, Israel had opened a 30-centimetre wall of a pre-existing archaeological tunnel from the Hasmonean period that was over 2,000 years old. The tunnel itself did not go under the Temple Mount, on which the Al-Aqsa Mosque is situated, and the opening of the tunnel was not even near the mosque. Nonetheless, the assertion persisted. Today, Israel's municipal plans for Jerusalem have equally generated waves of disinformation.

First, in his letter to the President of the Security Council, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Republic of the Sudan states that Israel's Jerusalem plan comes

> "in the context of annexing more occupied Palestinian territory" *[S/1998/558]*.

This is simply false. If a decision is taken to shift the municipal boundary of Jerusalem, the Government of Israel has stated that it will strictly apply to areas westward of Jerusalem that are within the pre-1967 lines. The planned adjustment is intended to provide land for housing and high-technology industries, thereby creating affordable homes and new employment opportunities for Jerusalem residents. The populations of the major western suburbs are not even being incorporated into Jerusalem, according to this plan. A similar adjustment of Jerusalem's western municipal border occurred in May 1993 without being the subject of United Nations debate, for good reason: this is entirely an internal Israeli matter on the municipal-administrative level rather than on the international level.

Secondly, Israel's critics point to the proposal for an "umbrella municipality" as a scheme to give Jerusalem administrative powers over Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The Palestinian Permanent Observer stated, in his letter to the Secretary-General dated 22 June, that the "umbrella municipality" is a

"concrete step towards...illegal annexation" *[S/1998/557]*.

This is simply not true. The "umbrella municipality" is nothing more than a coordination mechanism between Jerusalem and surrounding communities. It does not entail a shift in municipal boundaries. It does not entail the extension of municipal authority over any Israeli settlements. It allows neighbouring communities to coordinate services such as public works, sanitation, water, public-health clinics and education, with the purpose of creating economies of scale to reduce costs. These coordination mechanisms exist in different forms worldwide, without prejudice to formal municipal boundaries: in Brussels, Lyon, Montreal, Toronto and San Francisco.

Today, such patterns of regional coordination exist between Jerusalem and Palestinian cities in the West Bank that are under the complete jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority. For example, today Ramallah supplies water to the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Kafr Aqab. Does Israel believe that this is a conspiracy by the Palestinian Authority to erode Israel's status in northern Jerusalem? No. It is a practical solution to a local problem. Today, part of the sewage of Bethlehem and Beit Jalla flows westward to Jerusalem's waste-treatment plants. Does local cooperation in sewage indicate that someone is planning to alter Jerusalem's borders to the south? Nonsense. These are vital forms of coordination between neighbouring municipalities and have no international political implications.

Thirdly, in a letter to the Secretary-General dated 9 June 1998 that was distributed to the Security Council, the Palestinian Observer claimed that Israel's Ministry of the Interior had approved 58 housing units for Jewish settlers in the area of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. These facts are wrong. The Interior Ministry's Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee approved plans for the construction of 100 housing units, not 58. But these 100 units are for the Palestinian Arab residents of the A-Tur neighbourhood in Jerusalem, just next to the Mount of Olives. The 9 June letter was being considered for the preamble in a proposed draft resolution being considered for the Security Council. Does the Security Council wish to take any part in a PLO complaint against housing for Palestinian Arabs?

The greatest problem for Jerusalem today does not come from Israel's efforts to preserve and protect this city. Presently, Israel faces massive Palestinian non-compliance in fighting terrorism and preventing violence. From the signing of the Oslo agreements to the last Israeli election, nearly 250 Israelis have been killed in successive suicide bombings that emanated from areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority. When Israel signed the Hebron Protocol on 15 January 1997, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat undertook in the Note for the Record to "combat systematically and effectively terrorist organizations and infrastructure." Yet in the last year it was disclosed that bomb factories belonging to the Hamas organization were operating in Ramallah and in Bethlehem, just outside of Jerusalem. The bulk of the infrastructure used for repeated suicide bombing attacks in the heart of Jerusalem remains intact.

Additionally, in the Note for the Record, Chairman Arafat undertook to prevent violence and hostile propaganda. Yet on 19 January 1998, Mr. Arafat himself appeared on official Palestinian television praising Yahya Ayyash, the mastermind of the Hamas suicide bombings, calling him "the example, the model and the goal" of the Palestinians. This is simply unacceptable. Real peace requires that Governments educate for peace rather than legitimize hatred, violence and further bloodshed.

Israel has a long list of Palestinian Authority violations in the West Bank and around Jerusalem. And while it is useful to keep United Nations Members apprised of these issues, Israel brings its complaints directly to the negotiating table and not to the United Nations. Israel is seeking to complete a new set of understandings with the PLO, through the assistance of the United States, that will provide a framework for achieving Palestinian compliance with the Note for the Record and the Oslo II Interim Agreement. Equally, the place to address Palestinian concerns with Israeli policies is at the negotiating table and not in every multilateral body.

Israel is determined to make this peace process work. No State has been more frustrated with the lack of progress in the negotiations in recent months — for the lack of Palestinian compliance in security places, first and foremost, Israeli lives at risk. The international community has an enormous responsibility in this regard; it can support the existing framework for direct negotiations between the parties or undermine it with sterile political resolutions that have little factual basis.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The delegation of the State of Bahrain wishes at the outset to express its great appreciation to all the members

of the Security Council for responding to the Arab Group's request to consider the grave situation resulting from the Israeli Government's decision of 21 June 1998 on expanding the municipal boundaries of the city of Jerusalem. That decision would change the legal status of the city as a Holy City for all three major monotheistic religions, would increase Israel's grip on the Holy City, and would eradicate its Arab character by changing its demographic and population makeup. This is in contravention of all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

Since taking power, the current Israeli Government has taken actions that are inimical to the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories. That Government has abandoned all its commitments. It has turned its back on the peace agreements concluded with the Palestinians. As a result of the policies and practices of the Israeli Government, the Middle East peace process is now at an impasse. The Israeli Government's attacks against the peace process have continued in spite of intense efforts by the sponsors of that process — the United States of America and the Russian Federation — and by the States of the European Union to save it and return it to the right course. But the Israeli Government has persisted in its intransigence, flouting all agreements signed with the Arab side based on the principle of land for peace and on complete withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian lands, including Jerusalem, from southern Lebanon and from occupied Syrian Golan.

This month, the Israeli authorities of the present Israeli Government have taken a number of illegal measures, which include the following. First, they have created a so-called civil guard in the Israeli settlements on the West Bank. These armed groups, whose members surely belong to extremist settler circles, pose a threat to the security of Palestinians. This step was taken in clear contravention of Security Council resolution 904 (1994), which called upon Israel to confiscate the arms of settlers to prevent their use against unarmed Palestinians.

Secondly, the Ariel settlement has now been officially declared a city, which means that it no longer falls within the occupied territories and is therefore non-negotiable.

Thirdly, there has been systematic demolition of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem on hollow and varied pretexts. People have been forcibly thrown out of their homes, and their homes have been confiscated by settlers under the very noses of the Israeli police — and, indeed, with their protection.

Fourthly, the municipal boundaries of the city of Jerusalem have been expanded to include illegal settlements adjacent to Jerusalem, with the aim of judaizing the city. This plan includes the speedy construction of roads and the expansion of services between the settlements and Jerusalem, and an increase in the number of settlements.

When it was occupied by Israel in 1967, the Holy City of Jerusalem was about 7 square kilometres in area; 72 square kilometres have since been added. The expansionist plan will increase the area to 184 square kilometres. This plan constitutes an attempt to change the demographic composition of the city of Jerusalem by increasing the number of Jewish inhabitants to nearly 1 million in order to make them the majority.

The Council of Ministers of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council met at Riyadh on Sunday, 28 June 1998, and declared that

> "It utterly and completely rejects and condemns the decision of the Israeli Government to expand the geographic boundaries of the Holy City of Jerusalem and to attempt to change its demographic and population makeup, because such measures are contrary to the norms of international law and to binding international resolutions.
>
> "It further rejects the Israeli policy of expanding Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and the creation of armed militias composed of Israeli settlers, believing that such acts constitute a breach of the framework of the Madrid peace conference and of all relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 252 (1968), which declares such measures by Israel in Jerusalem to be null and void."

Moreover, the final communiqué of the twenty-fifth session of the Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference contained the following statement.

> "The Conference urged the international community, particularly the co-sponsors of the peace process, to pressure Israel to comply with the resolutions of international legality and to end its settlement policy. It called on the Security Council to revive the International Committee for supervising and monitoring the ban on settlements in Al-Quds and the other occupied Palestinian and

> Arab territories. It also urged the international community and all States providing economic and financial assistance to Israel to stop such assistance which Israel uses to carry out its settler colonization scheme in occupied Arab territories, in occupied Palestine and the occupied Syrian Golan." [*S/1998/311, para. 34*]

Such illegal Israeli policies are a clear breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the 16 Security Council resolutions on holy Jerusalem. They are a breach of the General Assembly resolutions adopted at the tenth emergency special session, all of which call upon Israel, the occupying Power, to refrain from making any administrative or demographic changes in Jerusalem until agreement is reached within the framework of the peace process, which will decide the fate of Holy Jerusalem.

It is clear that this official Israeli policy does not support a just peace. Indeed, it is a premeditated act against the peace process. Instead of refraining from such measures, we find Israel attempting to prevent any genuine progress in the peace talks so that it may continue to take illegal measures to change the facts on the ground in the occupied Arab territories, including in Holy Jerusalem.

The grave situation resulting from these Israeli measures is the reason the Group of Arab States called for this urgent meeting of the Security Council today. We expect the Security Council to fully shoulder its responsibility to compel Israel to respect previous Security Council resolutions on Jerusalem and to live up to its commitments under the Fourth Geneva Convention. We hope that the Security Council, in response to the request of the Group of Arab States, will take the appropriate measures to confront the illegal Israeli actions.

A firm Security Council position, based on its responsibilities to deter illegal Israeli action, in accordance with the Charter, will reaffirm the Security Council's credibility, imposing international legitimacy based on international law for Palestinian and all Arab occupied territories.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation)(*interpretation from Russian*): Moscow received with alarm the news of the decision of the Government of Israel to expand the municipal borders of Jerusalem, which would link Jerusalem to a number of major Israeli settlements on the West Bank of the River Jordan. We share the international community's negative reaction to this ill-advised and ill-timed Israeli measure and to other settlement activities undertaken by the Israeli authorities.

In the light of the gravity of the situation, Russia supported the request of the Group of Arab States for an urgent discussion of this question at a formal meeting of the Security Council. Israel's decision further complicates the Middle East peace process negotiations, particularly in the context of the ongoing highly complex phase of drawing up a mutually acceptable formula for the next round of redeployment of the Israeli army in the West Bank.

Unilateral acts against and violations of the status quo in East Jerusalem run counter to norms of international law, contradict the concluded Palestinian-Israeli agreements and are unacceptable in the context of the foundations of the Middle East peace process insofar as they are not in keeping with the which maintains that Jerusalem's fate will be the subject of final status talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Such acts are aimed at changing the demographic composition of the city and at altering its geographic and historical borders.

Russia, as one of the sponsors of the peace process, once again calls upon the Government of Israel to demonstrate a constructive approach to a settlement with its Arab neighbours and to refrain from resorting to unilateral administrative measures in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, which can cast a pall on the prospects for negotiations.

We are convinced that the Security Council will take a stand in favour of a speedy resolution of the problems relating to East Jerusalem, which will ensure progress in the peace process and respond to the aspirations of the peoples of the Middle East.

Mr. Sáenz Biolley (Costa Rica)(*interpretation from Spanish*): From the moment when you, Mr. President, initiated consultations among the members of the Security Council concerning the specific request made by the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations on 22 June 1998 to hold a formal meeting of the Security Council, the delegation of Costa Rica expressed its support for the idea that this principal organ of the United Nations should hold an open debate to consider the current situation of the Middle East peace process.

In that regard, Costa Rica believes that, while the substance and dynamics of the peace process have been determined by the parties, the Security Council has a

responsibility regarding this issue and that it should transparently and democratically hold an open debate on the current state of the peace process in that troubled region.

All Members of the United Nations are aware that for more than 50 years Costa Rica has maintained and continues to maintain a deep and constant friendship with the people and the State of Israel. It is well known that for more than 50 years Costa Rica has supported the right of the Israeli people to exist as a free and independent State. It is also well known that Costa Rica, on all occasions and in all forums, has upheld Israel's right to secure borders that guarantee its existence as a member of the community of nations.

Clearly, of course, this bond that Costa Rica has maintained and continues to maintain with Israel has made it difficult for us to maintain similarly full friendly and cooperative relations with an important group of United Nations Member States, as we would like to do.

Consequently, Costa Rica believes it can speak frankly and unreservedly to the friend, for that is the primary value of friendship. Costa Rica believes that peace in the Near East, the peace so laboriously worked out and developed, is perhaps the most remarkable undertaking in diplomatic negotiation in modern times. The peace of the brave in the Middle East is a unique and superior thing, and as such it should be preserved and made to prevail at all costs.

Thus, my country is concerned about the meaning and effects on the peace process of political acts, such as the administrative programme announced on 18 June 1998 by the Government of Israel, which comprises a set of measures relating to the city of Jerusalem.

The final, permanent status of Jerusalem must be determined and agreed in the manner established by the parties to the peace process. In that regard, Costa Rica takes this opportunity to make a clear appeal for compliance with the substance of the agreements, for actions to be in keeping with that which was established in Oslo and, in particular, for the parties to fulfil all their obligations without reservations and conditions.

Costa Rica trusts that the measures announced by the Government of Israel will not be put into effect and calls on the parties to resume quickly the implementation of the peace process.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): Developments in Israel affecting the occupied Arab territories are once again being debated in the Security Council in an atmosphere of persistent uneasiness over the future of the Middle East peace process. The archaeological excavations in the area of Burj al-Laqlaq, the establishment of civil guards in settlements in the West Bank and the expansion of the municipal authority of Jerusalem have contributed, above all else, to raising the level of international apprehension.

As noted recently in an editorial published by *The New York Times*,

> "any abrupt changes in the city's delicate status quo, particularly in the absence of negotiating progress with the Palestinians, can be explosive." [*24 June 1998, p. 24, "Jerusalem's Boundaries"*]

It is clear that the concerns of those who have called for this special meeting are very widely disseminated.

Until not long ago, we witnessed a series of impressive strides towards the establishment of a lasting basis for regional harmony in the Middle East. In the absence of the courage and determination displayed then by the leaders of the region, those bold steps would not have been possible. There were many historical milestones along this path, from the Madrid Conference of 1991 to the redeployment of Israeli troops from Hebron. The Brazilian Government followed this evolution attentively, moved by the sincerest hopes that a new pattern of cooperation in the Middle East would herald a new era of understanding among all its residents, irrespective of their ethnic or religious affiliation, whose positive impact would be felt far beyond the region.

We remain convinced that in spite of the setbacks suffered by the peace process, the great majority of the Middle Eastern population is committed to honouring the religious traditions that have sprung from their region to enlighten the four corners of the world by living together in a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect.

At the same time, the international community cannot fail to express its disquiet as agreements freely entered into seem to be taken lightly and disenchantment is allowed to spread among those in many quarters who had not only invested their political and diplomatic resources in the peace process, but had also placed their honest faith in its viability. To those around the world who remain attached to a just, lasting and comprehensive

peace in the Middle East it is simply unacceptable to contemplate a scenario in which mutual confidence is being eroded by episodes that are being perceived, at the very least, as an expression of lack of commitment to the peace process.

As was stressed by the Foreign Minister of Brazil, Mr. Luiz Felipe Lampreia in a recent statement,

> "The Brazilian Government considers that only through the continuation of the peace process in the Middle East and the renewal of mutual trust among the parties, in accordance with agreements that have already been signed, will it be possible to reach a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region, fulfilling the aspirations of all peoples and States concerned."

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Israeli Government's decision to carry out its plan of expansion in Jerusalem has aroused widespread concern in the international community. At present, when all sides concerned are making positive efforts to promote the further development of the peace process in the Middle East, the Israeli plan to unilaterally change the status quo of Jerusalem runs counter to these efforts and is bound to lead to the further complication of the situation in the Middle East region. We would like to express our concern about the development of this situation.

The Chinese Government has always believed that the settlement of the question of Jerusalem should be carried out through peaceful negotiations by all sides concerned, on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. We believe that the key to the settlement of the Middle East question lies in the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, the principle of land for peace and the effective implementation of the agreements that have been reached between Israel and Arab countries.

At present, the Middle East peace process has come to a sensitive and crucial point. We appeal to all sides concerned to cherish the hard-won peaceful situation, strictly abide by the relevant resolutions of the United Nations with regard to Jerusalem and the Oslo agreements and cease all actions that may lead to the deterioration of the situation so that the Middle East peace process can emerge from the current deadlock as soon as possible and lead to the creation of the conditions necessary for an early, comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of the Middle East.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): The United States shares the concern about the developments in the Middle East that have brought us together today in this Chamber. Having worked intensively on behalf of a just, comprehensive and durable Arab-Israeli peace, we are all too aware of the consequences specific actions can have on the Middle East peace process, particularly where such actions involve an issue of permanent status.

One such issue, of course, is Jerusalem, which represents one of the most sensitive and emotionally charged issues in the Arab-Israeli peace process. This is one of the reasons that Israelis and Palestinians agreed in their Declaration of Principles in 1993 to defer this issue to those negotiations. Logic suggests and reality demands that no action be taken that would prejudge or prejudice an issue of such sensitivity.

It is in this context that we regret the announcement by the Government of Israel that it intends to create an "umbrella municipality" and to broaden the jurisdiction and planning boundaries of Jerusalem. The United States views Israel's decision as unhelpful at this delicate stage of negotiations. We reiterate that all parties should refrain from any unilateral action which could prejudge the outcome of the permanent status negotiations. In this connection, we welcome the statement by the Government of Israel that there will be no change in the political status of Jerusalem pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations.

It is no secret that the Middle East peace process has faced severe difficulties and has been mired in a prolonged stalemate for many months now. That is not remarkable; given the daunting challenge of bringing a just, lasting and comprehensive peace to this region, major challenges and even setbacks were expected. What is remarkable is that the parties have managed, through good times and bad, to keep alive the possibility of negotiating their differences rather than confronting one another.

We ask them now to recommit themselves once again to this process of negotiation and agreement. The United States has offered a fair and balanced set of ideas to break the stalemate. The Palestinians have said "yes" in principle to our ideas. We are now working with the Israelis to determine whether they can also accept what we have outlined so that both sides can begin the challenging task of negotiating the core issues of permanent status. Only negotiation can resolve these issues, and we call upon Israel — as well as the

Palestinians — not to take action that would make these negotiations harder to begin and to conclude.

Should the parties demonstrate their readiness to move forward on this basis, they will not find the Council lacking in either the will or the enthusiasm to help them along the way. In the end, of course, the Council cannot and should not interject itself into issues that the parties themselves have decided will be dealt with in face-to-face negotiations. It is up to the parties to return to those negotiations, and the sooner the better. But the Council can and should continue to offer the parties its unqualified support and encouragement as they seek to bring an end to the bitterness and pain that have divided them for so long.

Sir John Weston (United Kingdom): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area — Iceland and Liechtenstein — align themselves with this statement.

The European Union is deeply concerned at the Israeli Government's endorsement of plans to extend the municipal authority of Jerusalem in a way which will alter the demographic balance in the Jerusalem area and tends to pre-empt the final status of occupied land. That concern is heightened by statements, attributed by the media to senior Israeli spokesmen, that the new arrangements are,

> "a basic change in Jerusalem's status which will be remembered as a turning point".

The European Union reaffirms the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and to the other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967. The European Union has consistently called upon Israel to recognize that the Convention applies de facto and *de jure* to those territories and to comply fully with its provisions. We have never accepted Israel's claim that the Convention does not apply to those territories. The Israeli Government, by initiating, encouraging and endorsing settlement activity in the occupied territories, is in violation of that Convention.

The extension of the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem municipal authority to settlements to the east and north of Jerusalem tends to pre-empt final status negotiations and contravenes the spirit of the Madrid and Oslo accords.

The European Union reaffirms its policy on the status of Jerusalem. East Jerusalem is subject to the principles set out in Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, notably, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and is therefore not under Israeli sovereignty. We believe that the final status of Jerusalem should be determined in final status talks. Neither side should take actions which seek to pre-empt this.

The European Union stresses that the current opportunity for progress on the Palestinian track must not be lost. The Union strongly supports the efforts of the United States to gain the agreement of the parties to a package of ideas which, if accepted, would open the way to implementation of existing agreements and the relaunch of final status talks. In that context, the European Union calls on Israel to recognize the right of the Palestinians to exercise self-determination, without excluding the option of a State. At the same time, it calls upon the Palestinian people to reaffirm their commitment to the legitimate right of Israel to live within safe, recognized borders.

It is all the more important at this juncture in the peace process to avoid unhelpful unilateral actions likely to arouse suspicion and put further obstacles in the way of peace.

Mr. Owada (Japan): Japan is deeply concerned about the present situation in the Middle East. In the face of a total lack of substantive progress in the peace process since the beginning of 1997, the sense of frustration which has come to prevail in the entire region is now mounting to a dangerous level.

On 3 December of last year, my delegation stated in the General Assembly debate on the situation in the Middle East,

> "Looking at these worrying developments, Japan is profoundly disturbed by the serious setback with which the Madrid process, launched in 1991 amid the hope of the international community, and with its blessing, is being threatened. The danger will be real if the present precarious situation surrounding the Palestinian track is not adequately addressed. The impasse in the peace process, not only on the Palestinian track but on all the tracks, could reduce to naught the precious mutual trust that has been built by the assiduous

> efforts of the parties involved over the years." [*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Plenary Meetings, 60th meeting, p. 24*]

My delegation has to state with great regret that this danger is now becoming real. The recent decision taken by the Government of Israel to approve the plan to strengthen Jerusalem by extending its municipal boundaries should be looked at in the light of this background. It is true that the Government of Israel contends that the plan to strengthen Jerusalem is non-political in nature, deals only with municipal and administrative issues and does not contradict in any way the provisions of the peace process as achieved in the agreement signed between the parties, to which Israel strictly adheres.

However, apart from the fundamental point that this position is based on a unilateral interpretation of a unilateral action, which other parties may not accept, it misses one essential aspect of the whole present crisis. What concerns us in the international community is that this unilateral action could lead to a crisis of confidence and reduce to naught the precious mutual trust that has been built by the serious efforts of the parties involved over the years, thus risking the destruction of the very basis on which the peace process entirely depends.

Faced with this new, controversial development brought about by a unilateral action by the Government of Israel, the Government of Japan had to express its concern in the form of an official statement by the Press Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 23 June 1998. That statement contains the following two essential messages: first, that the Government of Japan, having ardently and repeatedly called upon both the Israelis and the Palestinians to engage in constructive efforts to facilitate the peace process, expresses its regret over this decision taken by the Government of Israel, as it is expected to cast a negative effect on the fragile peace process; and secondly, that the Government of Japan will keep a close watch, with great attention, on how the Government of Israel is going to deal with the implementation of this decision.

The Government of Japan has consistently been calling upon the Government of Israel not to take unilateral action that could irreparably poison the atmosphere of mutual trust, which is so essential to progress in the peace process. The previous decision of the Government of Israel, taken last year, to construct settlements in Jebel Abu Ghneim, or Har Homa, in East Jerusalem, was just such an example of unwise provocation. We in Japan deeply regret that another such example is now added in the form of an extension of Jerusalem's municipal authority.

The repeated call of the Government of Japan on Israel has been based on its firm conviction that mutual trust among the parties directly involved is an indispensable premise for any substantive progress in the peace process. In the absence of an essential level of trust between the parties involved, no compromise proposal, however balanced and reasonable it may be, can be expected to command acceptance by both parties.

This is the primary reason that has prompted Japan to persistently call for maximum self-restraint by all parties concerned. Unfortunately, there are too many examples of this kind in the history of this troubled region, where failure to exercise self-restraint led to the deterioration of the situation through a loss of mutual confidence. It is of primary importance that the parties concerned summon their courage and wisdom to take concrete steps to implement the commitments they have already made in Madrid, in Oslo and thereafter.

It is undeniable that the final key to success in the peace process lies with the parties themselves. As my delegation stated in the formal meeting of the Security Council on 5 March 1997 on the situation in the occupied Arab territories,

> "There is a very real danger that the Israeli decision could lead to a crisis ... in which the erosion of the process of peace might result. If that should take place, the resulting [loss of mutual confidence] could destroy the very structure for peace in the Middle East, a structure so assiduously built up over the years since Camp David, Madrid and Oslo." *[S/PV.3745, p. 16]*

While this remark was made in the context of a controversy surrounding the construction of a new settlement in West Jerusalem, there is a striking similarity between the situation described in that statement and the present situation. It is all the more regrettable that my delegation has to repeat these same words today after more than one year has elapsed, while in the meantime the atmosphere surrounding the parties, in terms of their mutual trust and confidence, has further been deteriorated and poisoned.

The delegation of Japan believes that the open debate on the situation in the Middle East being held

today serves a useful purpose to the extent that the grave concern of the international community over the present developments surrounding the Palestinian situation has to register unequivocally in the minds of the parties involved. At the same time, however, we in the international community have to be on our guard not to let the present precarious situation deteriorate into one which could get out of our control.

Whatever we do in the context of the United Nations should be geared towards promoting and expediting the peace process in the Middle East. Our reaction to the situation would have to be carefully weighed from the viewpoint of what is going to be constructive for the peace process, as against what is not going to be constructive. In taking action in the United Nations, we should be guided by the yardstick as to whether the action is conducive to achieving our goal in the Middle East peace process.

It is my sincere wish that a new, favourable turn of events in the present situation in the Middle East, to be realized on the basis only of a common conviction of the parties involved that peace is indispensable to the survival of all the nations in the region, will come to prevail through mutual concessions and reciprocal sacrifices. It is high time that each of the parties realized that a sustainable peace in an environment of security can be built only on the basis of a common spirit of reconciliation and coexistence.

Japan will be happy to actively participate in any effort to achieve this goal in a revitalized peace process.

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): Peace is a priceless commodity. For a region of the world that has hardly known any meaningful peace for so long, any action that is likely to raise questions, no matter how good the intentions might be, should be avoided at all costs in the interest of peace. This is why my delegation cannot but express concern over the recent developments aimed at extending the municipal boundaries of the Holy City of Jerusalem, Al-Quds Al-Sharif. In our view, the present stage of the peace process, which is in a state of near-paralysis, has already given rise to feelings of frustration and fatigue. In this context, it would be ill-advised to do anything that would complicate matters unnecessarily and increase tension in an already volatile situation. We do not wish to see anything that could derail the peace process.

Besides, the Holy City of Jerusalem, we must remember, is home to all the three revealed religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — and therefore it should be transformed not into a theatre of conflict, but into a terrain for cooperation. Furthermore, we would have thought that the question of Jerusalem was scheduled for discussion at the permanent status/final status negotiations, in which case conventional wisdom dictates restraint and respite until then, in accordance with the Oslo accords.

In these difficult times, we should all be looking for practical ways to reactivate the peace process, as there appears to be no credible alternative to the Oslo accords. The latter constitute a reasonable *modus vivendi* for Israelis and Palestinians, in particular, because both sides need to live in peace alongside each other. Sacrifices and concessions had to be made to get to where we are today, although we still have a long way to go. That was why it was called the "peace of the brave".

The situation having come this far, my delegation believes that there should be no turning back. No stone should be left unturned in the quest for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. That is why we support the peace process. It cannot be gainsaid that it has been deadlocked for quite sometime now, but my delegation has faith in the ability of the United States, in its indefatigable efforts as the principal peace-broker, to give fresh impetus to the process — with the support, of course, of the parties concerned.

Let us give peace a chance.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): In 1993, the international community was hopeful that, following the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements — in the context of the Oslo accords — the elusive goal of peace in the Middle East seemed more and more attainable. These hopes were first tested, then strained and finally dashed, following acts that violated the letter and spirit of the accords. Specifically, the illegal construction policy in Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghneim in East Jerusalem, an issue which would be negotiated in the final stage of the Oslo accords, brought the entire peace process to its knees. In the tense and volatile environment that now prevails in the Middle East, recent pronouncements and the proposed construction of new settlements by Israel in Jerusalem have undermined not only the foundation, but the legitimacy of the whole Middle East peace process, pushing the actors close to the brink of armed conflict. These developments are of such great concern to the international community that the Security Council, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace

and security, must address the crisis in a cogent, direct and unemotional way.

I recall that, when the issue of the illegal construction of settlements in East Jerusalem came up in the Security Council last year, my delegation stated that Kenya had been a consistent advocate for peace and supported an honest and constructive dialogue between Israel and Palestine. We expressed deep concern about the threats to ongoing negotiations and called on all the parties to refrain from any activities that had the potential to irretrievably harm the peace process. We expressed the hope then, as we do again now, that cool minds and calm action would characterize the response of the Palestinians, Israelis and the international community. We make that fervent appeal again today, conscious of the unimaginable consequences to peace and security should any unilateral decisions to change the status and demographic composition of Jerusalem be made. Any unilateral decisions to change the status of Jerusalem are not only unacceptable, but also illegal.

All nations must strictly adhere to the resolutions of the Security Council. Current Israeli settlement policy is contrary to international law, Council resolutions and agreements already in place between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. We call on all the parties to respect this Council's resolutions on the status of Jerusalem in particular, and the Middle East in general. The question of the final status of Jerusalem must be decided through negotiations by the parties directly involved. The international community cannot allow the establishment of new facts on the ground that would prejudge final status negotiations.

Kenya believed the commitment made by both parties last year that they were determined to advance the peace process. We are disappointed that this commitment has not been met. We are disappointed that words have not matched action. Just as we were requested to exhibit restraint and trust, so do we now request both parties to exhibit the same. They must reactivate their political will, stand brave in the midst of adversity, and resolve their differences through dialogue. In this context, we strongly encourage the facilitators of the peace process not to diminish their zeal or ease in their resolve and energy to mediate a mutually acceptable solution to the whole problem of the Middle East, and specifically the Palestinian question, at the heart of which lies the policy of land for peace.

Kenya remains determined to continue supporting the parties in their search for durable, comprehensive, just and lasting peace. We therefore call for all the parties to exercise maximum restraint and urge them to resume discussions on the issue before us, because negotiations remain the only viable and peaceful option to resolve the crisis.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): France's position on the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and on the peace process, is well known. We share that position with the members of the European Union and with many other States that associate themselves with our statements. We believe, in accordance with the almost identical terms of six Council resolutions, that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel that have altered or purported to alter the character and status of Jerusalem are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith.

We have supported the peace process since its inception and have on several occasions — including recently, with our European partners — reaffirmed our support for the efforts of the United States to secure the agreement of the parties on proposals that we regard as reasonable. These positions are well known, and we will therefore merely recall them.

Too frequently we hear that the peace process is going through a crucial stage and that we should continue to be patient. Patience is warranted and, indeed, essential, when a situation is developing in the right direction. We would be the first to remind all the parties concerned that changes cannot be achieved in one day, or even in a year, that we must allow time for attitudes to evolve and that we must move in stages, each stage being well established so as to ensure the success of the next. That is what is generally called a process.

Unfortunately, we are witnessing a reverse trend: there has been no response to the proposals made by the United States several months ago, while at the same time an increasing number of decisions have been taken that have created *faits accomplis*. The expulsions and demolitions taking place in Jerusalem are causing humiliation, despondency and anger. This policy seems to arise out of a movement aimed at creating an irreversible situation in Jerusalem that in the long term would strip the question of the status of the city of any real meaning. We are meeting today because of a new decision that, if it were implemented, would amount to accepting a plan altering the boundaries of the city and

creating an expanded municipal structure. Inasmuch as that new structure would include West Bank settlements close to Jerusalem, it would clearly alter the existing status quo. Such an action would run counter to the spirit and letter of the agreements signed between the parties. It would be a breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. It would disregard the decisions of the Security Council. We therefore appeal to the Israeli authorities to renounce this approach.

The city of Jerusalem is a special and sacred place for three major religions. That is why, in 1947, the decision was taken to give Jerusalem an international status. Today, as then, only agreement between the parties can yield a solution that is acceptable to the international community. The chance for a lasting peace hinges on that agreement.

The deadlock in the peace process is profoundly disappointing and saddening to all those who admired the courage and vision of the Israeli and Palestinian leaders who committed themselves to it. But above and beyond our disappointment, it is the danger that this deadlock poses for regional stability that concerns us.

Israel's security is a legitimate concern, recognized by the international community and by the Palestinians. In this regard, the latter have taken brave measures which should be continued. But the only genuine security, as France itself knows, lies in the resolve of peoples and their leaders to choose coexistence and cooperation. Fortunately, Israel's right to live within secure and recognized borders is now well established. But the choice must be made once and for all in favour of discussions in good faith, rather than tensions. We therefore call once again for the Israeli leaders to choose negotiation, and we encourage those who are playing a special role in the peace process to pursue their efforts without respite.

We are ready to consider any decision whereby the Security Council, in accordance with its responsibilities, would place on record its concern in the light of the Israeli decisions relating to the boundaries of the municipality of Jerusalem and would also make a strong appeal to the parties to allow the peace process in the Middle East to break out of its deadlock. We fervently hope that it will be possible to secure consensus on such a decision, and we are ready to work to that end.

Mr. Essonghé (Gabon) (*interpretation from French*): We are meeting once again to discuss a question that has already been the subject of numerous debates in both the General Assembly and the Security Council. The expectations raised by these discussions have so far proved illusory, given the striking lack of progress in normalizing the situation in the Middle East. On the contrary, like causes produce like effects, and we are now witnessing yet another increase in tension between the parties in that region of the world.

Together with the rest of the international community, we are worried by the precarious nature of the current situation in the light of recent developments. The Madrid agreements of 1991 and all the meetings that followed them, especially those in Oslo, made it possible to create an ideal framework in which to build peace in that part of the world. We believed that such a framework would help resolve all the questions that were a major obstacle to any degree of progress in the peace talks between the parties. Now, however, we are bound to note that there has been a general reverse in the peace process. However, there is no solution but to work through the mechanism to achieve a comprehensive peace.

That is why all the parties should, above all, apply themselves to fulfilling their obligations and avoid taking any measure likely to create barriers to the implementation of the peace agreements. The loss of ground in the peace process clearly demonstrates that the international community should become more involved in the search for a settlement to this grave crisis. In this respect, we are convinced that, given the current deadlock, the United Nations has major political role to play in that part of the world.

Our country, Gabon, long ago embraced the principle of dialogue. We believe that only dialogue will enable the parties to eliminate the remaining areas where there is lack of understanding between them. The international community should work towards this end.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): The Security Council is meeting today to discuss the situation in the occupied Arab territories and to reaffirm its support for the continuation of the peace process on the basis of agreements reached thus far. We share the concern, frustration and disappointment of the international community over the current stalemate in the peace process and over the fact that the people of the Middle East, specifically the Palestinian people, are still being denied the opportunity to live in peace, security and prosperity.

Many times in recent history it seemed that no peace could be agreed upon in the Middle East, that wars, violence and fear were predestined for the people of the region. However, the peace process launched in Madrid and Oslo proved that that was not the case. For the first time since 1948 there was a realistic opportunity for and possibility of peace. What it took was for the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to show political will and wisdom, responsibility and courage. Firm foundations for peace were laid down with those agreements, and the subsequent efforts created a legitimate expectation that the peace process would become irreversible.

We still believe that the peace process must be made irreversible. It is up to the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to live up to their responsibilities and commitments to their own people and to continue taking further steps towards peace and security for the benefit and well-being of the people in the Middle East. Therefore the present obstacles to the peace process need to be overcome so that the negotiations on the final status can begin as soon as possible.

The issue of the settlements in the occupied territories has become a central obstacle to the whole Middle East peace process. There is a wide degree of consensus throughout the international community that these settlement activities are illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is applicable in the present situation. These activities include settlements, activities for enlarging settlement boundaries and establishing the "umbrella municipality", and the confiscation of Palestinian land in East Jerusalem. Settlement activities and other activities and plans which alter the demographic balance in the Jerusalem area represent obstacles to the peace process.

Jerusalem is not only a city, and it is not just a Holy City. Jerusalem is a Holy City for three religions. That is why the question of its status is so emotional and potentially so explosive, and that is why Jerusalem is one of the most sensitive and contentious issues in Israeli-Palestinian relations. The question of Jerusalem should be resolved in negotiations between the two parties themselves. Until then, the status established by Security Council resolution 242 (1967) continues to apply to all occupied territories, including Jerusalem. All sides should refrain from any action that could have negative implications for the peace process.

We trust the mediation efforts of the co-sponsors of the peace process, especially those of the United States. Their determination and commitment to success give us hope that the difficulties will be overcome and that the next, and most essential, stage of negotiations leading to the final status talks will begin. The right of the Palestinians to self-determination, with all the implications of that right, and the right of Israel to live within safe borders will have to be fully recognized and articulated in specific arrangements.

No credible alternative exists to the peace process in the Middle East. The commitments made by Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Madrid and Oslo, which have to be fully implemented, constitute a historic opportunity to reach a just and lasting peace in the region, which has been deprived of this for such a long time.

Mr. Dahlgren (Sweden): Let me first state that Sweden fully associates itself with the statement made earlier today by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union.

The Government of Sweden deplores the recent decision by the Israeli Government to extend the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem municipal authority. That decision constitutes yet another in a succession of measures by Israel to change the demographics of Jerusalem and to strengthen the position of the occupying Power, such as the demolition of houses in the Old City of Jerusalem and the decision to construct new housing in the Jabal Abu Ghneim area.

It is the long-standing position of my Government that all Israeli settlements in the occupied territory are illegal under article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This includes settlements in East Jerusalem. We believe that the Israeli settlement policy endangers the Middle East peace process in its entirety and that it violates the letter and spirit of the Declaration of Principles.

In our view, settlement activities establish facts on the ground which prejudge the final status negotiations. Actions which change the status of Jerusalem ahead of such negotiations cannot be tolerated. Our firm opinion is that the Israeli Government must rescind all such decisions, including the latest action, which is the reason for today's debate.

The Government of Sweden urges Israel to accept — as the Palestinians have already done — the American proposals on a further withdrawal from areas on the West Bank. We believe that this is at present the only way to regain the dynamics of the peace process and to resume final status negotiations. Back in 1993, the Government

of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) embarked on a historic negotiating process that should lead to a permanent settlement by 4 May 1999, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Israel and the PLO then agreed that true and lasting security for the two peoples can be achieved only through a political process, at the negotiating table.

Only such a negotiating process can pave the way for a comprehensive and just settlement that can lead to lasting peace in the Middle East.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Portugal.

Portugal fully subscribes to the statement made by the presidency of the European Union.

The successful conclusion of the Hebron Protocol had led us to believe that Israel and the Palestinians would, at this moment, be focusing on the timely implementation of all the agreements they had already reached and would by now be starting talks on the final status.

However, since then, the peace process has remained at a stalemate. That is why both the Council and the General Assembly, each according to its own responsibilities, are being called from time to time to deal with elements of disturbance that could jeopardize the peace process and disrupt international peace and security.

We would have expected to see the parties seated around the table, negotiating directly in a good atmosphere, enabling them to tackle the crucial issues which remain to be addressed.

But unhelpful unilateral actions are creating serious obstacles to the peace process. I am referring in particular to the recent endorsement by the Government of Israel of plans to extend the municipal authority of Jerusalem in a way that will alter the status quo of the city and prejudge the outcome of the final status negotiations.

We believe that this decision constitutes a violation of the numerous resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly. We also believe that such a measure contravenes the terms of reference of the peace process and the spirit of the Oslo accords. Furthermore, this decision follows a succession of unacceptable actions by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian population in Jerusalem. Those actions violate the Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies de facto and de jure to the occupied territories, including Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, these measures not only increase the frustration felt by all those who have been supporting the peace process, but they also encourage those forces on both sides which have been directly or indirectly opposing peace. This will also further complicate the task of those engaged in mediating or assisting the parties in the peace process in order to bring them together and help them overcome their differences.

Such measures can only undermine the indispensable trust and confidence that the parties must build up in order to achieve a just, comprehensive and longstanding political settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and to establish a new relationship based on cooperation from which all countries and peoples of the region will benefit.

In this regard, we appeal to the Israeli authorities to reconsider these decisions on the municipality of Jerusalem and to refrain from translating them into any concrete action, since this would only further derail the peace talks. We also appeal to the Israeli Government to accept, as quickly as possible, the current United States initiative, so that the peace process can resume.

Portugal firmly believes that there is no alternative to the peace process in the Middle East. The Council must urge the parties to live up to their commitments and to comply with their obligations under international law and the agreements they have reached.

In this context, my delegation is ready to consider, at an appropriate time, further action by the Council on this issue.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Sudan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. Our thanks go also to the representative of Kenya for the able way in which he presided over the work of the Council last month.

I have the honour of addressing the Council on behalf of the Group of Arab States at the United Nations, as current Chairman of that group.

We sincerely thank you, Mr. President, for your efforts and for the consultations you have led in response to the request to convene an emergency formal meeting of the Council to consider the recent decision by the Government of Israel, the occupying Power, to expand the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem. Your efforts testify to your determination to shoulder your responsibilities as President of the Council and do credit to the Council's credibility and transparency. I also thank the other members of the Council for their similar interest and for agreeing to the convening of this meeting.

Once again the Security Council is meeting, this time to consider the serious measure adopted by the Government of Israel on 21 June 1998, aimed at expanding the municipal boundaries of the city of Jerusalem to include surrounding settlements and vast tracts of the territory of the West Bank. That decision came in the context of expanding Israeli sovereignty over occupied Palestinian territories by distorting the character of Holy Jerusalem and changing its status as a city that is sacred to the three major monotheistic religions, and by tightening Israel's hegemony over the city, eradicating its Arab character and changing its nature and demographic composition.

The relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council — in particular Council resolution 252 (1968), which considers such Israeli measures regarding Jerusalem to be null and void — reaffirm the special status of Jerusalem and the applicability to it of provisions relating to the rest of the occupied Arab territories. The latest measure is part of a series of grave, flagrant violations by the Government of Israel of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

What is new and interesting about this measure is that it is not only a flagrant violation of international law and international legitimacy, but also the very embodiment of Israeli Government actions that openly and flagrantly violate the Madrid and Oslo peace agreements with the aim of pre-empting their final outcome. It is also a clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and the Hague Rules of 1907, and constitutes aggression against and a challenge to the legitimacy of the international community. Israel has always claimed to be interested in peace, but in fact does nothing but carry out measures that obviously run counter to peace and that can only perpetuate the conflict in the region.

Arab and Islamic countries, along with other concerned international parties, have followed with grave concern and deep anxiety this series of Israeli Government violations aimed at imposing a fait accompli in the occupied Palestinian territories. We reiterate our condemnation of the latest Israeli decision not only as an obstacle to peace, but also as a step intended to destroy the entire peace process, and as a measure that ignores the rights and feelings of all Muslims and Christians around the world.

Having been frustrated and discouraged, our Palestinian brethren have turned to the Security Council. They know that Jerusalem has a very special status and a solid international position in the United Nations, in the General Assembly and in the Security Council. Suffice it to say that the Council has adopted 16 resolutions whose form and content constitute the proper legal framework for the city of Jerusalem.

We appreciate the position taken by the Secretary-General on the latest Israeli Government decision with regard to Jerusalem. This position is in line with the view expressed in a statement by the League of Arab States, over which my Government has the honour of presiding this month, at the emergency meeting held on 25 June 1998. That statement, which was issued at that meeting and which has been circulated as an official document of the Security Council, affirms that the new Israeli decision is the latest in a series of Israeli violations of international law and an act of aggression by Israel against international legitimacy, an act that reeks of flagrant racism and violates the territory and the rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. The statement calls upon the United States of America, as a sponsor of the peace process, to do what it must to compel Israel to abide by its commitments under the Madrid process. It expresses appreciation of the position taken by the Russian Federation, calling upon it, as a sponsor of the peace process, along with the European Union and all other concerned parties, to take a firm position on these Israeli practices, which ignore and violate the feelings and rights of all Muslims and Christians throughout the world.

The Council should understand that the Israeli decision to expand the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem will have grave repercussions for the peace process, exposing it to destruction and taking the entire region to

the edge of the precipice. Therefore, the Council should express the strongest condemnation of the decision taken by the Israeli Government, declare that decision to expand the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem null and void, and demand that Israel rescind it. The Council should also call on Israel to affirm its commitment to its legal responsibility in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 1949, whose provisions apply to all lands occupied by Israel, including Jerusalem. Any action taken by the Council which does not reaffirm these positions of principle would cause the Council's credibility and its shouldering of its responsibility under the Charter to be shaken, and would impute to the Council a double standard. Thus it would send the wrong message to the Israeli Government, a message that would encourage it to continue to endanger the peace process and to drive the entire region to the brink of explosion.

On behalf of the Group of Arab States at the United Nations, I request the Security Council to adopt the draft resolution before it.

The President: I thank the representative of the Sudan for the kind words he addressed to me, to my predecessor and to the Security Council.

The next speaker is the representative of the United Arab Emirates. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Samhan Al-Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates)(*interpretation from Arabic*): It is my pleasure to express my thanks and appreciation to you, Sir, for your tireless efforts upon your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I wish to convey the same sentiment to your predecessor, the representative of Kenya.

The Security Council meets today to consider the decision made by the Israeli cabinet on 21 June 1998, pertaining to the expansion of the municipal borders of the city of Jerusalem to include neighbouring settlements and other illegal West Bank settlements. The measure aims at annexing more occupied Palestinian and Arab land. It aims at changing the demographic composition as well as the institutional and legal makeup of this historic Holy Arab City by uniting it geographically through a new network of settlements and complicated roads, the ultimate aim being to isolate it from the other cities and villages of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the other Arab occupied regions.

This is a provocation not only to the Palestinian people, but indeed a provocation to all Arab and Islamic peoples. It is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, the resolutions concerning international legitimacy, the basic principles of the peace process and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

It is therefore a rejected measure. It will not give the Israeli Government a legitimate or legal right to lay its hands on any part of these lands, particularly since the international community has condemned such Israeli practices in many Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, all of which provide that the administrative and legislative measures taken by the Israeli Government to change the legal status and demographic composition of Jerusalem are null and void and devoid of any legal merit.

This Israeli decision, which coincides with the newly declared direction to be taken by the Israeli Prime Minister of calling for the convening of a second peace conference in Madrid, and the political and legal falsehoods in the statement of the Permanent Representative of Israel made today before the Security Council, all clearly reveal the aggressive tactics of the Israeli Government based on expansion and prevarication with regard to its legal and political commitments in accordance with the peace agreement it has signed.

It also explains the continuing obstacles placed by Israel to the resumption of negotiations on the various tracks since taking power. It explains Israel's persistence in conducting a relentless campaign of colonialist settler measures, particularly in Jerusalem, among which was the launching of the largest colonial settlement in Jebel Abu Ghneim. It explains many other measures, such as the arming of its settlers in order to promote their participation in the policy of oppression, the demolition of homes, the confiscation of lands, the encirclement of Arab inhabitants, the suffocation of their movements and the withdrawal of their identification cards.

All these measures aim at annexing the eastern part of Jerusalem. It is a preparation for gradual illegal deportation of Palestinian Arabs, the original inhabitants of this Holy City, in order to replace them with tens of thousands of new settlers from all parts of the world. All these measures have grave consequences which will lead to increased suffering among the Palestinian people and to an escalation of violence and tension in the region, as well as the resultant endangerment of international and regional peace and security.

The State of the United Arab Emirates, while condemning all these Israeli violations, reaffirms its full support for the demands of the Palestinian people. We support their rejection of all Israeli colonialist settler policies on Palestinian land, particularly the city of Jerusalem. We believe that all such violations and measures taken in a premeditated fashion by the Israeli Government, in addition to the increasing successive obstacles facing the efforts for resumption of negotiations, whether on the Palestinian or Syrian and Lebanese tracks, are a clear attempt by Israel to shirk its commitments. The international community must therefore unanimously hold Israel fully responsible for the grave repercussions resulting from its violations.

Despite the positive efforts undertaken by the international community, as well as by the two sponsors of the peace process, especially the United States and the European Union, to find an objective and pragmatic solution to push the peace process forward on the basis of international legitimacy, we regret to find that the Israeli Government deliberately hampers all such efforts, flouting all its legal, political and moral commitments, without having to shoulder any responsibilities for the consequences of such aggressive behaviour.

We therefore express the hope that these States will continue to make further efforts by demanding that Israel renounce these positions which do not respect its commitments. We also call on the Security Council today to condemn such Israeli violations. We call on the Security Council to take a firm position, compelling the Israeli Government to renounce its latest decision as well as all previous colonialist settler measures. We call for the immediate cessation of the building and expansion of Israeli settlements and the dismantling of current settlements, particularly in Jerusalem.

We believe that only this will open the way to renewed efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East as a whole. This alone will guarantee the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and its right to self-determination and to the establishment of its independent State on its national territory in Palestine. This would fulfil the aspirations of the peoples and the States of the region for stability, security and peace.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Arab Emirates for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Baali (Algeria)(*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to convey to you, Sir, the great pleasure it gives me to see you presiding over the Security Council with such skill and competence and in a manner that commands our respect and admiration.

I should also like to pay a well-deserved tribute to the representative of Kenya, Mr. Mahugu, who succeeded in conducting the work of the Council with skill and effectiveness in a particularly busy month.

Finally, I would like to express our distress and our sorrow at the sudden death of Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, a most eminent son of Africa, who tirelessly pursued his mediation efforts in Angola. We wish to take this opportunity to extend our sincere condolences to his family, to his country — Mali — and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We express the hope that the cause of peace and reconciliation to which he so fervently devoted himself will be realized.

My delegation asked to participate in the work of this urgent meeting of the Security Council in order to express Algeria's position concerning the threats to peace and security that have multiplied in the Middle East region since the series of unilateral and illegal steps taken by Israel in the occupied territories, particularly in occupied Al-Quds.

In fact, over the space of several weeks now Israel has taken a series of decisions to extend, expand and tighten its grip over the territories that it occupies. The occupying Power has decided to pursue its policy of settlement and settlement enlargement. This is demonstrated by the project for the new Jewish settlement at Jebel Abu Ghneim; the creation of a civil guard composed of Jewish settlers in the occupied territories; the transformation of the illegal status of the Ariel settlement in order to make it a fully separate town and thereby exempt it from the final status negotiations; and, lastly the extension of the boundaries of the city of Al-Quds to areas within the occupied territories in order to encompass a number of Jewish settlements situated to the east of the Holy City.

The measures taken by Israel to restart its settlement process are in outright defiance of international law and the will of the international community. Israel's decision

to expand the municipal boundaries of Al-Quds is proof of this policy of provocation, because it conflicts with the rudimentary rules of international law, ignores the resolutions adopted within the context of international law, contravenes the principles of the Middle East peace process and violates the spirit and letter of the Oslo accords.

This decision is first and foremost in conflict with international law because it knowingly disregards a whole set of international treaties, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. That Convention prohibits the imposition by occupying Powers of their administrative jurisdictions on territories under their domination, the transfer of civilian populations to those territories and any disruption of the composition of their populations. This is precisely what has been constantly done, and is still being done, by Israel in Al-Quds al-Sharif.

This decision is also deliberately contemptuous of resolutions of international legality, first and foremost among which are those of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Security Council has adopted many binding resolutions on the subject of the city of Al-Quds, all of which have remained unimplemented. These include resolutions 252 (1968), 476 (1980) and 478 (1980), all of which define Al-Quds al-Sharif as an occupied city, forbid the occupying Power from changing the geographic, demographic or urban configuration of the city and regard any measure that is contrary to these provisions as null and void and as something that should be revoked.

Moreover, Israel's decision is not in keeping with the basic principles of the peace process. It contravenes the principle of land for peace, which is the keystone of the peace process on which the participation of Arab countries in the Madrid Conference of 1991 was based. It is also very clearly spelt out in the letters of invitation that the sponsors of the process sent to all the parties, including the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people.

Lastly, Israel's decision to expand the municipal boundaries of occupied Jerusalem — along with other decisions that affect the Holy City — is a flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the Oslo accords signed between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority. Those accords decided that the consideration of the question of Al-Quds al-Sharif would be deferred to the final phase of the peace negotiations. This was done, however, on the condition that the two parties would undertake to maintain the status quo of the city and refrain from any decision or unilateral measures that would result in a change in the legal status of the city or its demographic and geographic character.

The Israeli measure is therefore contrary to that commitment and is clearly a deliberate act on the part of the Israeli administration aimed at anticipating events and piling up *faits accomplis* in order to be able to exercise the necessary pressure on the Palestinian party during the last stage of the negotiations on the final status of Al-Quds.

The provocative actions that Israel continues to undertake in the region of the Middle East in general, and in Al-Quds al-Sharif in particular, is undoubtedly an outright threat to international peace and security. The climate of tension that they create in the region could cause the situation to degenerate at any stage into a fresh confrontation that would sweep away all peace efforts.

The persistence of the Israeli administration in defying the will of the international community and ignoring resolutions — particularly those adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council — is simply an unacceptable act of defiance towards the international community and very clearly undermines the entire foundation for action of the United Nations.

In addressing the Security Council, the highest international forum responsible for safeguarding international peace and security, the Arab Group expects that the Council will fulfil its responsibilities to induce Israel to cease its expansionist projects in the occupied Palestinian territories, abandon its plans to extend the municipal boundaries of Al-Quds al-Sharif to the Jewish settlements that surround it and conform to the rules of international law that incontestably prohibit any alteration of the demographic and geographic composition of the occupied city. In fact, any leniency on the part of the Council will only lead to extremism and increasing stubbornness on the part of the Israeli Administration in the pursuit of its policy that is contrary to peace and to the letter of the law. The Council is therefore called upon today to take a firm and clear-cut position vis-à-vis these Israeli acts of provocation and to shoulder its responsibilities fully.

The Arab Group also makes an especially urgent appeal to the two sponsors of the Middle East peace process — the United States and the Russian Federation — to act with resolve to salvage the peace process and put it back on track.

The Arab countries have made a strategic choice in favour of peace. They remain convinced that the only way to resolve the Middle East problem once and for all lies in the establishment of comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, on the basis of the principle of land for peace and guaranteeing the right of the Palestinian people to create its own independent State on Palestinian territory, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his kind words addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Morocco. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Snoussi (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, allow me once again to express my great pleasure at seeing you presiding over the work of our Council.

Today we are meeting once again here in the Security Council to discuss a highly sensitive and highly painful issue, that of the destiny of the city of Al-Quds. Indeed, the recent decision of the Israeli Government to expand the municipal authority of Al-Quds is yet another step in a series of challenges that Israeli officials have placed before the international community.

The "umbrella authority" measure is the latest in this series. Reiterating its contempt for United Nations resolutions that consider the establishment of settlements in Al-Quds and in the other occupied territories as an illegal act and that emphasize that all measures aimed at changing the geographic and demographic nature of this Holy City are null and void, the Israeli Government is yet again, unfortunately, providing us with proof of its arrogance and its obvious intention not to respect the official commitments it has undertaken.

As His Majesty King Hassan II has emphasized, the Israeli Government wishes to create a new school of international law by which any new Government can purely and simply renounce the commitments undertaken by the preceding Government. That school would unfortunately be a school of annihilation rather than one of existence. Indeed, what the Israeli officials have not wanted to understand is that by signing the Oslo agreements, their country in fact had acted for the first time as a State recognized by the Arab States. And in signing these agreements sponsored by two super-Powers, the country was building a bridge of confidence and respect with the international community. What the Israeli officials did not want to understand either is that what has been destroyed can, unfortunately, be reconstructed only with a thousand times the effort and a thousand times the sacrifices. But the question that everyone is asking is whether we can still do that.

The Israeli plan aimed at establishing an irreversible situation in Al-Quds and at surrounding the Arab populations is a flagrant contradiction of the relevant Security Council resolutions and of international legality, which forbid changes in the legal status and demographic and geographic composition of Al-Quds. The intransigence of the present Israeli Government has led to a halt in the peace process on all of its tracks. It has thus encouraged the establishment of new settlements in the occupied Arab territories, and particularly in Al-Quds, and the decision to dig a tunnel under Haram al-Sharif, an action which, as the Council will recall, gave rise to very painful events.

However, the cruelties and humiliations continue. As the Council can see, the latest Israeli decision is not an isolated action but rather the result of a long-term strategy aimed at totally changing this Holy City, whose heritage includes the Al Aqsa Mosque, the first of the two kiblahs and the third holiest place for Muslims and the cradle of all the revealed religions.

The Council can easily imagine the perverse effects the latest Israeli decision will have on what we call the peace process, a process that, unfortunately, now exists in name only.

Morocco, which has always advocated a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, can only condemn most severely the Israeli decision regarding the extension of the municipal authority of Al-Quds. Morocco, whose sovereign, as you know, is the Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, solemnly affirms that there can be no genuine peace without Al-Quds. The Muslim community throughout the world will allow neither the occupation nor the encirclement of that city, which is the symbol and the centre of our revealed religions.

Morocco strongly reaffirms its opposition to this new act of aggression, which, unfortunately, strengthens all of those who had thought that no genuine peace with Israel was possible. Israel has succeeded in reviving an atmosphere of suspicion that we thought had been buried for ever. As everyone knows, including Israel, we were among those who had contributed to recreating the

climate of confidence. But, unfortunately, all of that has been buried.

The international community has launched numerous appeals for Israel to put an end to its acts of provocation, but in vain. The innumerable resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly continue to be treated with utter contempt by Israel. Some see here the confirmation of a policy that no one wished publicly to acknowledge, and we are still among those who believe that the Security Council will not allow its impartiality or sense of justice to become suspect.

Israel's impunity up to now, regrettably, has certainly encouraged it along that path. The Muslim community believes that the questions of Palestine and Al-Quds are priority questions and, faithful to this position of principle, wishes to emphasize the need for the return of the Holy City to Palestinian sovereignty in order to help bring about a just and lasting settlement to the Palestinian problem.

The Muslim community has reaffirmed on numerous occasions that this Holy City was an integral part of the territories occupied in 1967 and has recalled in this connection the relevant resolutions demanding that its geographic and demographic nature remain unchanged. There is no room for any interpretation or evaluation.

We hope that the Security Council will see fit to launch an appeal, and we hope that this will be the last time, calling to order the Israeli officials by reminding them of their international obligations.

At this point, when contempt, hatred, disillusionment and a feeling of frustration have taken over, only a miracle could restore confidence and allow for the re-establishment of genuine peace. Are we going to wait until it is too late to act? Those who are engaging in these acts, these provocations, are not aware of the terrible risks to which they are subjecting the communities that live in this region. Nor are they aware of the dangers to which they are exposing Israel itself and its neighbours. If more time is lost, tomorrow no one will want peace any more, even those who have fought for it. Are we going to stand by with our arms folded? Let us do something while there is still time, because tomorrow it will already be too late.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of Morocco for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Norway. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway is concerned about the recent approval by the Israeli Government of plans which would alter the demographic balance in the Jerusalem area. This new Israeli plan is not conducive to creating trust between the parties in the Middle East peace process, which is essential to move the process out of the present stalemate. On the contrary, the decision might increase the tension between the parties, as it might contribute to pre-empting the outcome of the final status talks.

Israel should recognize the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention — both de facto and *de jure* — to the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and to other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, and should comply fully with its provisions.

Norway appeals to the parties to respect the letter and the spirit of the Oslo accords. Norway urges the parties to the peace process to intensify their bilateral consultations at the highest possible level, to implement the outstanding issues in the Interim Agreements, including the redeployment on the West Bank, and to move as fast as possible to the final status negotiations.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I thank you and your colleagues for so quickly responding to our call for the convening of this meeting.

It is my honour, on behalf of the State of Qatar and the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to speak at this meeting on a city that is dear to over a billion Muslims throughout the world.

Since the current Israeli Government took power, the peace process in the Middle East has been subjected to continuous suffocation. It would seem that whatever breath remains in the process will finally be stifled by Mr. Netanyahu and his Government if the international community remains unable to assert the international

legitimacy of a State that it established legitimately, under the auspices of the United Nations, more than 50 years ago. That birth led to the infliction of a grave injustice on a people that had not participated in any war, large or small, national or racial, in a foreign continent. It is indeed a historical paradox that the victims of racism and extremism have now descended to depriving another people of their political, religious and human rights. This has turned inside-out the very principles on which the United Nations and its Charter were established.

Since taking power, the current Israeli Government has tried to impose a *fait accompli* on the occupied Palestinian people by attempting to alter the legal, demographic and geographic status of the Arab lands in Palestine, particularly the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. That city is holy to all Arabs and Muslims; no Power on Earth can impose a *fait accompli* on over one billion Muslims for whom Jerusalem is of the utmost sanctity. Since taking power, the current Israeli Government has attempted to drain all content from the peace process in order to serve its political objectives, which run counter to that process. It has prevaricated in implementing Israel's agreements with the Palestinian National Authority; rejected any settlement on Al-Quds Al-Sharif and any withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territories; and turned its back on the Oslo Declaration of Principles of 1993 and the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip of 1995. These agreements were signed under the sponsorship of States Members of this Organization and of this very Council.

The current Israeli Government has tried more than once to kill the peace process, opening a tunnel under the Western Wall of the holy Al-Aqsa mosque, building the Jebel Abu Ghneim settlement, and besieging the Palestinian people and its national leadership. In attempting to flout the peace process and to evade international law, the Israeli Government, on 21 June, announced its plan to expand the boundaries of the municipality of Jerusalem by creating a so-called "municipal umbrella" that would include a number of illegal settlements on the West Bank. This plan aims at intensifying Israel's isolation of the city of Jerusalem and at pre-empting the result of any negotiation to be held between the Israeli and the Palestinian sides.

The peace process initiated in Madrid in 1991, and the Declaration of Principles of 1993 and the Interim Agreement of 1995 that resulted from it, were based on the principle of land for peace. The Israeli Government is attempting to stand the fundamental principles of the peace process on their heads. In this way, it hopes to occupy more land and obtain peace without relinquishing territory. It is attempting to hold the Palestinian people and the entire Arab nation hostage to its intransigence and the Israeli sense of exclusivity. It seems that Israelis believe themselves subject to no international law or legislation and that international public opinion is of no importance whatsoever to them.

The Israeli Government's settlement policy and its attempts to alter the demographic and legal status of the Holy City of Jerusalem are grave violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and of the Hague Rules of 1907. They are a flagrant gauntlet thrown down before the resolutions of the United Nations and international legitimacy, particularly the resolutions of this Council — resolutions 252 (1968), 267 (1969), 271 (1969), 298 (1971), 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 672 (1990) — all of which affirm that any administrative and legislative action or measure taken by Israel to alter the legal status and demographic position of the city of Jerusalem is null and void. These Council resolutions deem the Israeli Government's settlement policy in the occupied territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, to be legally null and void and an obstacle to lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

As we stand on the threshold of a new century, with all its challenges, the international community, as represented by the Security Council, must not accept Israel's justifications for the injustices it continuously metes out to the Palestinian people, in violation of international law. In this specific situation, the Security Council is called upon to uphold its previous resolutions and must compel the Israeli Government to stop flouting the will of the international community, violating international law and threatening the peace process in the Middle East with a slow death, which would be followed by conflagration.

The State of Qatar calls on the international community to compel Israel, the occupying Power in the occupied Arab territories, to abandon forthwith its irresponsible policies in order to spare the peoples of the region the repercussions of the certain death of the peace process, which would in turn unleash further violence.

The President: I thank the representative of Qatar for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It is a pleasure for Egypt to see you, Sir, representative of the friendly State of Portugal, presiding over and guiding this Security Council meeting today. I should also like to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Mahugu of Kenya, for having so skilfully guided the work of the Council last month.

The Council is meeting today to consider the illegal and provocative decision taken by the Israeli Government on 21 June to expand the limits of the municipality of Jerusalem to include a number of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. The objective is to impose a new *fait accompli* on the ground that would prejudge the outcome of final status negotiations and alter the legal status of Jerusalem, while isolating it from the rest of the occupied territories in the West Bank.

This decision is part of the plan that the present Israeli Government is trying to implement in order to obstruct the peace to which the previous Israeli Government had committed itself. The question of Jerusalem is the most sensitive question in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Indeed, Jerusalem enjoys a unique status from a political point of view. Furthermore, Jerusalem represents a spiritual and historical heritage for adherents of the three divine religions. That city is, in fact, a source of deep religious sentiment in the Arab and Islamic world. Therefore, any unilateral measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, that are designed to alter the status of Jerusalem before there is agreement on the final status of the city are all null and void, and we reject them in both form and substance. Not only do such measures run counter to international legitimacy and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, but they strip real peace of any content and are designed to undermine efforts to achieve peace. It is sufficient to recall that the Israeli decision aims at annexing settlements on the Israeli borders. This in itself runs counter to contractual obligations undertaken by Israel with the Palestinian Authority designed to defer the outcome of the fate of these illegal settlements at least until the final settlement has been reached.

This illegal decision demonstrates, at least, the unwillingness of the present Israeli Government to establish peace with its neighbours, and its persistence in ignoring that its pressure in the occupied territories constitutes nothing more than a physical presence as an occupying Power. This presence confers no rights on Israel. On the contrary, it imposes obligations under international and bilateral conventions now in effect, which must be complied with until the final agreement puts an end to the occupation.

The international community, represented by the United Nations and all of its bodies, with the Security Council at the forefront, have firmly confronted the illegal measures undertaken in the past by successive Israeli Governments to annex East Jerusalem. In this context, I should like to emphasize several important realities that should not be forgotten when considering this question.

First, the city of East Jerusalem is an integral part of the rest of the Palestinian territories, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This entire territory was occupied by Israel by force during the June 1967 war. The provisions of the United Nations Charter affirm the necessity of rejecting the principle of the acquisition of territory by force, as was emphasized in resolution 242 (1967). Consequently, all of the territories which were militarily occupied, including Jerusalem, must be liberated. Secondly, the United Nations has reaffirmed in numerous binding resolutions that the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, are territories to which the provisions of the 1907 Hague Convention apply, and they are also legally subject to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. I should like in particular to emphasize article 47 of that Convention, which prohibits the occupying Power from annexing any territory that it occupies, and article 49, which prohibits the transfer of the civilian population of the occupying Power to the occupied territory.

To demonstrate how Israel is flagrantly in contravention of those conventions it is sufficient to point out that there were no Israeli citizens in East Jerusalem before the 1967 occupation, yet now there is already an Israeli majority.

Numerous resolutions of the General Assembly, the most recent of which was adopted at the tenth emergency special session, emphasize that the Fourth Geneva Convention is fully applicable to the occupied Palestinian territories. In consequence of the seriousness of the Israeli violations, the Security Council must reaffirm the applicability of that Convention to those territories, including Jerusalem. Furthermore, under article 1 of the Geneva Convention, the States parties to the Convention have a collective responsibility to guarantee respect for

all of its provisions and their application in all cases. There can be no doubt that the recent Israeli decision requires States parties to take concerted action to ensure the applicability of the Convention.

Thirdly, the Security Council has already adopted numerous resolutions on Jerusalem. Unfortunately, I must state today that Israel has trampled them all underfoot. I should like to refer in particular to resolutions 252 (1968), 271 (1969) and 476 (1980), all of which demand that Israel respect its commitments as the occupying Power.

The most relevant one to our deliberation today is resolution 478 (1980) which provides in paragraph 3 that, *inter alia*:

> "all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem...are null and void and must be rescinded".

It is therefore imperative that the Security Council act to guarantee respect by Israel of all its resolutions, as it does with regard to other States, in order to maintain the credibility of principles and criteria laid down by the Council in various cases and with respect to other States, without any discrimination. Furthermore, the Council must not be perceived to be adopting double standards.

Fourthly, one of the major provisions of the Interim Agreement, signed in Washington in September 1995, should be respected. I am referring to article 31 of that agreement which states:

(*spoke in English*)

> "Neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations"

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Those provisions must be applied, despite the systematic refusal of the Israeli Government to accept the commitments of previous Governments, whether under the Oslo agreements or more recent agreements determining relations between them and the framework for agreement between Israel and the Palestinian party. The principle of respecting and implementing international contractual agreements must be upheld; otherwise no conventions or commitments have any value. In this context, I should like to repeat the comments of the Permanent Observer of Palestine: the violations are the acts that are being committed, not the responses to those acts.

The entire world knows that Israel is continuing its actions and has long-term plans for the annexation and total assimilation of the city of Jerusalem. Israel is continuing to take successive measures designed to change the status and character of Jerusalem, and has been doing so since the occupation in 1967.

Today these attempts are being repeated in its decision to place settlements on the West Bank under Jerusalem's municipal authority. That decision shows that the Israeli Government once again is rejecting all of its contractual commitments and all of the norms of international legality. Instead of deciding to implement the second stage of the withdrawal from the West Bank, this Government has surprised us by taking an illegal decision on Jerusalem. This is reminiscent of the situation that existed before the Madrid Conference — a state of affairs that could launch the region into a new cycle of violence and counter-violence.

Egypt, which has faith in a just and lasting peace, has opened the way to the achievement of peace in the Middle East. Today we are deeply concerned because peace in the Middle East is in a constant state of jeopardy owing to the unilateral measures and steps taken by Israel, which flout the will of the international community and of all peace-loving States. States interested in peace in the Middle East, and in particular the two co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States and the Russian Federation, must shoulder their responsibilities to push the Israeli Government to reverse this serious decision and to stop all of its desperate attempts to place obstacles on the path to peace - attempts that will have adverse and destructive effects on the region and on international peace and security.

What is needed today is the scrupulous and courageous implementation of all the international and bilateral commitments that have been entered into.

Finally, the international community, represented by the Security Council, must today more than ever reaffirm its position of principle, given the illegal nature of the Israeli measures concerning Jerusalem and the non-recognition of the effects of such decisions. The international community must also urge Israel to honour its commitments under the Geneva Convention and under

the bilateral agreements it has signed with the Palestinian side. Israel cannot shirk the provisions of these conventions.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for the kind words he addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.

Security Council

Fifty-third Year

Provisional

3900th Meeting

Tuesday, 30 June 1998, 3.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Monteiro	(Portugal)
Members:	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Amorim
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Costa Rica	Mr. Sáenz Biolley
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Essonghé
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Japan	Mr. Owada
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	Sweden	Mr. Dahlgren
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

The situation in the occupied Arab territories

Letter dated 23 June 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/558)

98-85552 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting resumed at 3.40 p.m.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 30 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Mokhtar Lamani, Permanent Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, during the Council's discussion on the item entitled "The situation in the occupied Arab territories".

That letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/1998/592.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mr. Lamani.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to begin by extending to you, Mr. President, our sincere congratulations.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our condolences on the death of Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye, who lost his life as a martyr in the performance of his mission as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Angola, while carrying out his noble humanitarian effort.

I would also like to express our sincere appreciation for your response, Mr. President, and for the response of the other members of the Security Council, to the request made by the Arab Group to hold this emergency meeting to consider the serious decision, taken by the extremist Israeli Government on 21 June, to adopt the programme declared by the Israeli Prime Minister on 18 June aimed at strengthening Israel's illegitimate grip on Jerusalem. That provocative decision was intended to expand the municipal boundaries of the city of Jerusalem to include Israeli settlements on the West Bank, to establish greater municipal authority and to annex more occupied Palestinian territories into the municipality of Jerusalem, thereby erasing the Arab character of the city and altering its status from a Holy City characterized by love and tolerance into a city that is totally within the Israeli grip. This would result in erasing its Arab identity and altering its demographic composition while Judaizing it totally.

While my country believes that this Israeli decision represents one aggression in a series of Israeli aggressions against Arab and Palestinian occupied territories, we strongly and categorically condemn and reject it. The Syrian Arab Republic regards that decision as not only a provocation of the Palestinian and Arab peoples, in particular, and of the peoples of the world, including Muslims and Christians, in general but also as a flagrant violation of international law and the resolutions of the Security Council, especially the 16 resolutions the Security Council has already adopted on Jerusalem. Security Council resolution 478 (1980) stresses in paragraph 3 that,

> "all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and in particular the recent 'basic law' on Jerusalem, are null and void".

This new Israeli decision is yet another flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and of the Hague Convention of 1907. The Syrian Arab Republic considers this new Israeli decision as null and void and of no legal consequence.

The new plan of the Israeli Prime Minister is within the framework of systematic procedures and steps aimed at destroying the peace process in its entirety. The decisions taken by the Israeli Government with regard to Jerusalem and its policies of annexing occupied Arab territories are the practical embodiment of the policies of "ethnic cleansing" that were strongly denounced and condemned by the international community with regard to Bosnia, for example. These measures taken by Israel remind us of the cantonization policy adopted by the racist regime of South Africa before the victory over apartheid.

The process of "ethnic cleansing" conducted by Israel against the Palestinian people has led millions of Palestinians to leave their homeland and, if this continues, will force scores of thousands more to go into

exile. Palestinians, who have always lived on the land of their forefathers, now hold only 0.5 per cent of their land; while the Israelis, who have brutally and through repression and mass massacres confiscated the land, control 99 per cent of all Palestinian land.

It is noteworthy that international warnings have been addressed to certain countries. Navies are being moved on the high seas and planes are being redeployed, while those who commit those actions do not bother to denounce in their statements or in a few words Israel's actions as being contradictory to human rights and to the purposes and principles of the United Nations and the Geneva Conventions.

Scores of resolutions have been adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly to demand that Israel withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, cease the confiscation of land and refrain from taking any action that would alter the geographic, demographic and legal status of the occupied territories. However, Israel has treated those resolutions with total disregard. We believe that this raises the following questions.

Why are laws, resolutions and international sanctions made applicable to certain States but not to Israel? Why does Israel remain an outlaw? Why does it challenge and defy these laws and the Council?

In this context, since the Israeli Prime Minister took power he has taken the following actions in contradiction of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions: digging a tunnel next to the Al-Aqsa Mosque; establishing a new settlement in Jebel Abu Ghneim and planning for the construction of 6,500 housing units; undertaking archaeological excavations at Burj al-Laqlaq, within occupied East Jerusalem, as part of Israeli plans to build a settlement in the heart of occupied Jerusalem; providing protection to extremist settlers and support for their attempts to confiscate housing units such as those in Silwan, in East Jerusalem; confiscating additional occupied Arab lands in order to build settlements; making plans to build new settlements and encircling roads; demolishing Palestinian houses and withdrawing Palestinian identity cards; and persisting in not adhering to agreements, commitments and the destruction of the peace process. The list is very long.

This pattern of behaviour by the Israeli Government would lead us to say that the accumulation of oppression, injustice and tragedy to which the Palestinian people and the other Arab citizens in occupied Arab territories are subjected can only lead to an explosion endangering the security and stability of the whole region. It is unimaginable for those who live under occupation to accept it or to adapt and adjust themselves to the practices of the Israeli occupation.

The Israeli Prime Minister recently declared that his Government will continue to build settlements in every place in the Holy City, and reiterated his commitment to build the settlement in Jebel Abu Ghneim in defiance of international resolutions and calls of condemnation. The President of the Israeli Knesset associated himself with his Prime Minister by saying:

> "The appropriate Israeli response to the statement by the United States Secretary of State with regard to Jerusalem lies in the intensification of settler activities in the city and the implementation of Israeli designs without heed for any declarations or positions against it."

The policies of the extremist Israeli Government have led to a total paralysis of the peace process on all of its tracks. If it were not for the deceptive appearance of movement once in a while that does not deal with the matters of substance on the Palestinian track, during the last two years, the world would have seen the true picture in a tangible manner and would have realized that the Israeli Prime Minister has completely stopped the peace process from his first day in office, especially by having followed the policies of his ancestors in the expulsion of Arabs from their lands and bringing in new Jewish settlers from all over the world to replace them.

Nevertheless, the international community is about to discover the glaring truth, since the conflict between the extremists in the Israeli Government which was about only 2 per cent of the lands of the West Bank, has become a very explosive issue which may affect the American sponsor as well.

Syria will never give up one iota of its land, and will not permit regression from what has been achieved through previous negotiations. We will always insist on resuming the negotiations from the point where they stopped. In this regard, we would like to reiterate that strategic option of the Arabs for the establishment of a just and lasting peace is based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), which all demand the complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, and

from southern Lebanon and the Bekaa to the recognized international boundaries. Moveover, Syria will always do its best to guarantee the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to the establishment of its independent State on its own soil.

The Israeli Government, by turning its back on its agreements, pledges and commitments reached during the peace process that started in Madrid in 1991, is solely responsible for destroying the peace process. While we appreciate the increasing international awareness of the reality of Israeli policies and their objectives, which are inimical to peace, we would like to urge the sponsors of the peace process, the countries of the European Union and friendly and peace-loving States, to continue their serious work in order to compel Israel to commit itself to the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy and to fulfil the agreements, pledges and commitments which have been agreed upon as well as to resume the negotiations on both the Syrian and Lebanese tracks from the points at which they stopped.

In view of this bitter reality at which we have arrived through what is called the "Israeli political kitchen", and the misleading attempts of the head of the Israeli Government to justify its measures, the Security Council is now called upon to bear its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security by defending its credibility and its resolutions, by having Israel respect these resolutions, by condemning the Israeli decision to expand the geographic boundaries of Jerusalem and by compelling Israel to rescind this serious and provocative decision which, among other measures, represents another time bomb that would lead to an explosion of the whole region. The Security Council should also reiterate Israel's commitment to apply its relevant resolutions and those of the General Assembly, particularly resolution 446 (1979) to the effect of establishing an international commission of the Security Council to monitor and follow up the situation in order to prevent settler activities in Jerusalem and the Arab and Palestinian occupied territories.

At a time when we support the Palestinian people in order to guarantee their legitimate rights, we would like to urge the international community to provide all types of assistance and support to them.

In the light of the above, we look forward to the Security Council's taking a position on the side of the right and the just, a position of determination to protect international peace and security. The Security Council should adopt the necessary and mandatory measures and procedures that would prevent Israel from implementing its plan to expand the boundaries of Jerusalem, particularly since the Council is duty-bound to apply the provisions of the Charter with regard to giving effect to its resolutions without any double standard. Here we would like to recall these Security Council resolutions: 252 (1968), 267 (1969), 271 (1969), 298 (1971), 446 (1979), 452 (1979), 465 (1980) and 476 (1980). We believe that a mere expression of concern or denunciation by this Council is no longer enough to have Israel change its aggressive decisions and settler and expansionist plans, either in the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, or in other Arab occupied territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon.

The issue requires that the Security Council move effectively and decisively and take the necessary practical measures to rescind the decision and plan of the Israeli Government to expand the boundaries of Jerusalem and to bring pressure to bear on Israel in order for it to resume the talks on all tracks from the point where they stopped. In this regard, it is necessary to reaffirm the necessity of avoiding any double standard, especially with regard to the maintenance of peace and security, and most particularly when it comes to an issue such as Jerusalem. This is so especially because Israel's continuation of this extremist policy would lead to the destruction of the peace process and would endanger security and stability in the region.

The President: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his kind words addressed to me and members of the Security Council.

The next speaker is the representative of Yemen. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): As this is the last meeting to be held under your presidency, Sir, I should like sincerely to congratulate you on the remarkable manner in which you have presided over the Council's work this month. At the outset, I also wish to thank you for having convened this special meeting to address the situation in Jerusalem, despite the reluctance and opposition of some.

Jerusalem is the symbol of the Arab-Israeli conflict and is at the heart of the Palestinian question. It will remain so until comprehensive peace is reestablished in

the Middle East, including in the Holy City. On 21 June, the Israeli Government, the occupying Power, took the very serious decision to expand the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, to undertake new construction projects, to include Israeli settlements and to annex significant territories of the West Bank to Jerusalem. This is a clear attempt to efface the character of the city, alter its demography to create a Jewish majority, do away with its Arab identity, and destroy the legal and natural status of Jerusalem, a city that belongs to all three monotheistic religions.

My Government strongly condemns this decision of the Israeli Government, which blatantly violates the Madrid peace framework, all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and challenges international legitimacy. The Security Council has adopted 16 resolutions on Jerusalem and repeatedly affirmed that any legislative or administrative measure taken by Israel to alter the legal status and the demographic composition of the city is null and void. The Council has also affirmed that the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 is applicable to all territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem.

My delegation invites the Security Council, the organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security, to fulfil its obligations and duties under the Charter by adopting practical and tangible measures to prevent Israel from repeatedly violating the Council's resolutions. The Council should enact urgent and expeditious measures to prevent the Israeli Government from implementing its decision on Jerusalem and its settlement policy.

Ever since the extremist Government in Israel came to power, it has relentlessly sought, in all seriousness and enthusiasm, to distance itself from the Oslo accords and to undermine and impede the peace process. All of this has taken place at a time when opportunities to establish peace have arisen. The Palestinian Authority has demonstrated its adherence to the peace process by discharging its responsibilities vis-à-vis that process. We urge this Council to reassume its role in accordance with resolution 242 (1967), the essential basis for achieving a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

The President: I thank the representative of Yemen for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Lebanon. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I am pleased to begin my statement today by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. The work of the Council has been conducted with efficiency and skill under your presidency.

I am also pleased to extend to Ambassador Mahugu, the Permanent Representative of Kenya, our appreciation for his work last month.

Today, the Security Council is again addressing a topic of great importance to the future of peace in the Middle East: the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, particularly in holy Jerusalem. This city has a special status, the uniqueness of which is represented by the spiritual heritage of the followers of all three revealed religions and the deep religious feelings associated with it, particularly in the Arab and Islamic worlds.

We have spoken on this topic in the Council on a number of occasions in recent years and we do so again today in the wake of the adoption by the Israeli Government, on 21 June 1998, of a programme announced by the Prime Minister, which aims at strengthening Israel's illegal hold on Jerusalem. The plan would expand the boundaries of Jerusalem and would extend the municipal authority so as to include some Jewish settlements in the West Bank, establishing a so-called "umbrella authority". This is a concrete step towards the illegal annexation of more occupied Palestinian land to the already illegally expanded Jerusalem municipality.

With the convening of the Madrid Conference in 1991 and the establishment of the foundations and principles of the peace process, we had hoped that a new dawn had broken over the region in which just, lasting and permanent peace would prevail. But Israel's expansionist settler policy and confiscation of territories dealt a blow to these hopes, which the new Israeli Government has all but extinguished. It has openly reneged on the commitments on which the peace process is based, made settlement an integral part of its political priorities, and adopted new and dangerous measures to annex East Jerusalem. Thus, once again and for the fourth time in two years, we return to the Security

Council to focus our attention on Israel's illegal measures and practices in occupied East Jerusalem, aimed at consolidating its attempts to alter the legal status and demographic composition of that city.

Last year the Israeli Government began building a new settlement that includes 6,500 housing units at Jebel Abu Ghneim. Today it is trying to expand the area of settlement. That is being done in the context of a series of similar measures taken by Israel, including its declared intention to build another settlement at Ras Al-Amud, within the original borders of East Jerusalem, in the wake of its demolition of buildings at Burj al-Laqlaq in order to establish yet another settlement in their place. All of this is the prelude to another campaign aimed at reducing the Arab and Palestinian population of Jerusalem. We have always warned that these policies and illegal measures to expand Jerusalem are extremely dangerous.

The Israeli authorities are still holding to the new tunnel that was built under Al-Haram Al-Sharif, despite Security Council resolution 1073 (1996). The Security Council has so far adopted 16 resolutions on Jerusalem, and has repeatedly announced that all measures and arrangements adopted by Israel, the occupying Power, including those legislative and administrative arrangements that aim to change the legal status and demographic composition and character of the city, are null and void and without any legal validity. Moreover, the Security Council has repeatedly declared that the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 applies to all the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, including Jerusalem.

Given this context, we should like to affirm the following principles. First, we express our full solidarity with the Palestinian people, who refuse to submit to the occupation, no matter how powerful that occupation may be. Secondly, the settlement and expansionist measures, justified by the Israelis on the pretext of security, which has brought numerous Israeli Governments to power, have proved to be a failure. Those measures have led to an escalation of violence and an increase in tension between the Arabs and the Israelis. What peace can be established as long as occupation continues? A peace that is a *fait accompli* imposed by force cannot survive, and is doomed to ignominious failure.

Thirdly, the current problem is not an emergency; it is the result of basic Israeli mentality and policy. To deal with that problem we therefore need the international community, as represented by this Council, to take a clear position reaffirming to the Israeli Government its rejection of the annexation of the occupied Arab territories, including East Jerusalem, and its policy of settlement in other occupied Arab territories.

East Jerusalem, like other towns and villages in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, are territories that were seized by force by Israel in 1967. Occupation will not bestow any legitimacy with the passage of time. The provisions of international law state that those territories, which were acquired by force, must be evacuated. The international community should never recognize that occupation.

Those Arab territories, including East Jerusalem, are subject to the provisions of the Hague Convention of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Therefore Israel, as the occupying Power, must not make any changes in these territories. The Security Council has adopted a long list of resolutions, all of which demand that Israel respect its commitments and obligations as the occupying Power. The most important of these is resolution 478 (1980), which determines that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and in particular the recently "basic law" on Jerusalem, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith.

We hope that the Security Council will oppose the threats posed to Jerusalem by the Israeli Government's actions and violations of international law and by the blockade it has imposed on that Holy City, in addition to the demolition of houses, the confiscation of identity cards and the building of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Security Council, which is responsible for international peace and security, must adopt specific, concrete measures to stop the Israeli plan to expand the borders of Jerusalem and any other Israeli violations of international law and of Security Council resolutions.

In issuing this call we are working honestly and sincerely for the future of peace in the region. Adopting a relaxed attitude towards Israeli leaders has brought only violence and destruction for Arabs and Israelis alike. Our position is in conformity with the previous resolutions of the Council and all resolutions of international legitimacy. It is also in conformity with the high precepts of

international law, which remains the cornerstone of today's civilized world.

We believe that it is the duty of the Council to work for the implementation of the provisions of the Charter and the resolutions that it has adopted in other regions of the world as well as in the Middle East on the basis of one and the same standard. We should not forget Security Council resolutions 252 (1968), 267 (1969), 271 (1969), 298 (1971) and 476 (1980), which all considered the legislative and administrative measures as well as other actions adopted by Israel in Jerusalem to be null and void.

We call for a resolution that will clearly express the international community's rejection of and opposition to Israel's policy and its measures to annex the occupied territories or expand the settlements. We would like such a resolution to include specific measures to commit Israel to act in conformity with international legitimacy. Time is not on the side of peace. There is a sense of foreboding, of an evil that might spill over and that may not be confined to the region.

Respect for previous Security Council resolutions on Jerusalem must remain one of the main requisites for the achievement of peace in the Middle East. If the Council were to turn a blind eye to such Israeli actions, it would call into question the credibility of the Council's criteria and standards which the Council applies in dealing with various questions. Real peace is at hand, provided that we work for it on the bases that we all agreed together in Madrid. The most important of these are land for peace and the full implementation of international legitimacy. This requires Israel to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem and the Golan, to the lines of 4 June 1967, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as resolution 425 (1978), which calls for strict respect by Israel for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders.

It also calls upon Israel to stop its military action against the territorial integrity of Lebanon immediately and to withdraw its troops from all Lebanese territory.

We call upon the cosponsors of the peace process and the international community to continue to bring pressure to bear on Israel to implement the pledges and commitments it has entered into and to resume negotiations on both the Lebanese and Syrian tracks from the point where they stopped. The incomplete measures that have been taken within the peace process should not free Israel from the pressure of public opinion and of the international community and should not allow it to continue its massive settlement activities.

The President: I thank the representative of Lebanon for the kind words he addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ka (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (*interpretation from French*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on the outstanding manner in which you have handled all of the important matters before the Security Council and on the excellent work you have accomplished since the beginning of your term. I should like also to congratulate your predecessor, my brother and friend Mr. Mahugu, Permanent Representative of Kenya, on his timely initiatives and on the significant achievements he recorded during his presidency of the Council last month.

The Security Council is meeting once again today to consider the serious situation that has resulted from the recent actions of the Israeli Government. In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I should like to express the firm condemnation of our Committee of the illegal decision taken by the occupying Power to extend the borders of the municipality of Jerusalem, thereby consecrating, through unacceptable administrative and legal ploys, its authority over territories that do not belong to it.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people has consistently drawn the attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council not only to the massive and repeated violations on the part of the occupying Power of the relevant resolutions of the Assembly and the Council, but also to the numerous obstacles that Israel has set up to impede the peace process, which had given us all so much hope.

The question of Jerusalem is at the heart of the Israeli-Arab conflict, and any unilateral attempt to alter the status of the Holy City, its demographic composition

and its geographic and institutional structure represents a grave violation and a threat to the security and stability of the region.

The Government of the occupying Power, through the policy of *fait accompli*, has set about modifying unilaterally and in violation of international law the religious, cultural and historical characteristics as well as the Arabic, Islamic and Christian identity of Jerusalem. It will stop at nothing to achieve its objective of Judaizing Jerusalem. It has resorted to the destruction of houses; the confiscation of land; the illegal extension of settlements, particularly in East Jerusalem; the encircling and isolation of the Holy City by armed settlers; and the confiscation and destruction of the identity papers of Palestinians citizens, who have been expelled from their own city.

Indeed, for more than 18 months, a silent deportation of Palestinians from East Jerusalem has been taking place before our eyes. Hundreds of people are being expelled from their land with the precise objective of preserving a permanent and uncontested majority of Jews in the city. Let us not forget that these expelled Palestinians are not immigrants. They were born in Jerusalem, and their houses and families are in Jerusalem. Their fundamental rights can never be disregarded.

Other provocations include the sealing off of territories, torture, punitive expeditions, administrative detention, and the violation of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinians.

The recent adoption of a quota system as part of a plan concerning Jerusalem aims to ensure that by the year 2020 Jews will constitute 70 per cent of the population of Jerusalem and Arabs only 30 per cent. Such unilateral decisions represent not only a provocation for the Palestinian people but also major setbacks in the peace process, which has been on hold for more than a year.

Our Committee strongly denounces that decision, which is a clear violation of international law, of the Fourth Geneva Convention and of the relevant Security Council resolutions. That decision by the Israeli authorities also violates the letter and spirit of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, particularly those adopted during the tenth emergency special session.

The United Nations and several intergovernmental organizations have repeatedly reaffirmed the special status of Jerusalem as well as their position that Israel's occupation is illegal and its actions therefore null and void under international law.

The recent Israeli decision concerning greater Jerusalem represents, in our view, a fresh example of such illegal measures. The establishment and expansion of settlements, the isolation of East Jerusalem from the West Bank, the measures taken against Palestinian residency status, and the archaeological excavations are all ongoing sources of concern to the international community.

Our Committee is deeply concerned at the non-respect by the occupying Power of the Fourth Geneva Convention and of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including the 16 resolutions adopted by the Council on the city of Jerusalem. The Committee considers that the decisions taken by the occupying Power regarding the Holy City of Jerusalem are null and void. The Committee therefore joins its voice to those of the States Members of the United Nations in inviting the Israeli Government to reconsider its decision and to put an end to the policy of *fait accompli* with respect to the Holy City, whose future must be determined solely within the framework of the final status negotiations.

The Committee launches an urgent appeal to the authorities of the occupying Power to renounce the measures already taken or envisaged to change the geographic, demographic, religious and institutional characteristics of the city of Jerusalem, as well as of the other Arab territories occupied since 1967.

The Committee, through me, would lastly like to call on the Israeli Government to commit itself to the implementation of the agreements already concluded with the Palestinian Authority in order to create the necessary conditions for the resumption of the peace process and the full and effective implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

It must be recalled that Jerusalem belongs to both the Palestinians and the Israelis, to Muslims, to Christians and to Jews. That city is a mosaic of all cultures, of all religions and of all the peoples that have enriched Jerusalem from time immemorial up to this day. Jerusalem must remain the city of peace, made up of present and future emotions, dreams and realities. It must be the birthplace of love and coexistence between all peoples and their beliefs.

Finally, allow me to express our deep gratitude to all the members of the Council for having made the decision to convene this open meeting on such an important and delicate matter. In so doing, the Security Council remains loyal to its calling and to the role entrusted to it by the United Nations.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People hopes that at the conclusion of this debate, the Security Council will demonstrate to international public opinion its willingness to contribute to making this sensitive region of the world a zone of peace and cooperation. It hopes, lastly, that the Council will take timely measures, with the support of the sponsors of the peace process, to put an end to the unilateral decisions concerning control over the Holy City of Jerusalem, which, I reiterate, must remain the living symbol of peaceful coexistence between religions and peoples that are different yet complementary.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for his kind words addressed to me, to my predecessor and to other members of the Security Council.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Jordan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abu-Nimah(Jordan)(*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your outstanding presidency. I would also like to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Kenya, for having presided over the Council's endeavours with his usual wisdom.

I also wish to express my condolences on the untimely passing of Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General who died in the exercise of his functions.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this meeting to discuss a most important matter: the decision of the Israeli Government to expand the city of Jerusalem towards the occupied Arab territories to the north, west and south. This is an illegal decision in contravention of various resolutions of the General Assembly and of this Council, in particular those resolutions that reject Israel's decision to annex the Arab part of Jerusalem. That decision also contravenes the 1993 agreements that deferred the question of the status of Jerusalem to the final stage of the negotiations, and in accordance with those agreements, the status of Jerusalem was to remain unchanged until agreement was reached at the final stage of the negotiations.

That decision also runs counter to the 1949 Geneva Convention and all international laws that guarantee protection for persons under occupation and their property. We call upon the Council to reaffirm its refusal to accept these changes, to reaffirm its early resolutions in connection with Jerusalem and to demand that Israel respect and implement them, as it does of other States. We are pleased that preceding speakers have confirmed this position.

The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has firmly opposed and condemned Israel's decision. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs stated on 22 June 1998, that Jordan categorically rejects this decision and considers it null and void. He added that any attempts to whitewash the decision taken by Mr. Netanyahu are unacceptable and would fail to convince anyone.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Jordan has also called on all international Powers to convince Israel that its action are null and void and that it is destructive to the peace process and all that was achieved by other leaders who made the ultimate sacrifice for peace and for the well-being of future generations.

In this regard, the Jordanian House of Representatives adopted a decision on 23 June condemning the Israeli decision on Jerusalem and describing it as one more link in the chain of flagrant violations of resolutions on Jerusalem and the policy of annexing Arab territory. This reflects Israel's defiance of resolutions of international legitimacy and the harm it does to hundreds of millions of Arabs and Muslims.

Furthermore, our Government repeated its condemnation of and indignation at all Israeli attempts to alter the Arab character of Jerusalem, particularly the plan to expand the city. The Islamic and Arab Ummah was also called on to oppose this desecration of their sacred rights. All international organizations and peace- and justice-loving countries have been called on to oppose this decision by all means, because the Israeli decision will have the most harmful consequences for the peace process now and in the future.

This Israeli decision links the chain of illegal measures adopted by Israel and brought to the attention of the Council, particularly the opening of the tunnel near a number of sacred Islamic sites, which led to bloody and tragic events, and the building in Jebel Abu Ghneim of Israeli settlements, a decision that was opposed by the entire international community and all Arab States and that brought the peace process to a halt.

The Israeli decision was also condemned by the General Assembly. We warned against the dangers of Israeli policies that destroy the foundations of peace. We said that the destruction of homes, the expulsion of inhabitants from Burj al-Laqlaq, the confiscation of the identity cards of the original settlers of Jerusalem, the confiscation of Arab land, the sealing off of the city of Jerusalem to prevent Arabs from going there for medical treatment, study or religious services, the ongoing isolation of Palestinian cities, the thwarting of freedom of movement and the expansion of settlement colonies are all inherently dangerous acts. They widen the gap of acrimony, deepen the feelings of despair and frustration and therefore constitute a threat to security.

It is clear that Israel, in its decision to expand the city of Jerusalem, aims at creating an opportunity to Judaize the city and strengthen its hold on it. In fact, the Prime Minister of Israel candidly declared that the objective of that plan was to keep the Arab population under 30 per cent. It is also clear that Israel plans to expand its settlement projects in Arab territories at the expense of the legitimate inhabitants, and to create new facts on the ground prior to the final stage of negotiations. This is a path strewn with dangers.

Though we continuously reiterate our rejection of violence as a means of settling disputes, we believe that the measures adopted by the Israeli Government are a means *par excellence* of sowing the seeds of violence and terrorism. Therefore, from this rostrum, we call upon the Israeli Government to reconsider policies which consolidate the gains of force and war, to undertake the implementation of agreements and to accept the bases we have all agreed to as foundations for peace. It was that peace which we began together at Madrid, in a blessed initiative, through which major progress has been achieved.

However, Israel has opted for closing this path, and has refused counsel even from its closest friends and allies. We in the Middle East are confronting major dangers. We must close ranks in order to avoid the negative consequences of such acts. The continuation of these illegal acts of aggression against the simplest yet the most sacred of people's rights, against their properties, their hopes and their future, we will not allow us to expect anything but the abyss of violence, conflict and hatred. In Jordan, this is not the option we chose, and it will never be.

The President: I thank the representative of Jordan for his kind words addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to express my appreciation for your efforts. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Kenya, for his role in presiding over the Council last month.

The Security Council is meeting for the third time in a little over a year to consider the situation in the occupied Arab territories, particularly in the Holy City of Jerusalem, where on 21 June the Israeli Cabinet adopted a decision that would expand the boundaries of the municipality of Jerusalem to include some of the adjacent settlements and large areas of the West Bank. This new Israeli decision is one of the most dangerous Israel has adopted with regard to the Holy City. It represents a step in a programme that is perfectly clear to all and that aims to achieve several objectives. Among these objectives are the annexation of more Palestinian territory to the municipality of Jerusalem, whose authority was previously expanded illegally, the alteration of the demographic composition of the city, the obliteration of its character, and the change of its status as the Holy City for all revealed religions, as well as the eradication of its Arab identity.

The new Israeli decision and the plan that it implies represent not only a provocation of the Palestinian people, its will and its leadership, but also a challenge to the will of the international community and a clear violation of international law and legitimacy. As we all know, this is in complete contradiction of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. It also repudiates the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, particularly the more than 16 relevant resolutions of the Security

Council regarding the city of Jerusalem, including in particular resolution 252 (1968). That resolution provides that all measures and actions adopted by Israel with regard to Jerusalem are null and void.

This is not the first measure on Jerusalem adopted by Israel. Rather, it is but a step in a long series of measures and illegal actions that aim to change the facts on the ground in favour of Israel. These include the building of settlements such as the one at Jebel Abu Ghneim — an issue on which this Council could not come to a decision but which is still being considered by the emergency special session of the General Assembly. This is in addition to other measures that aim to tighten the grip, economically and socially, on the Palestinian people.

In spite of repeated calls from the international community, Israel persists in challenging the will of the international community by refusing to implement the commitments and pledges that it assumed in the framework of the peace process and of other concluded agreements. Among these is the agreement to consider the status of Jerusalem in the final stage of the peace process and the agreement not to adopt, in the interim, any measures that would change the existing situation.

What is needed today is for the Council to adopt firm measures to prevail upon Israel to rescind its decision. That would represent a positive step in the efforts to give impetus to the peace process. This is what Tunisia has been working for: the establishment of a permanent and just peace in the Middle East, in order to give substance to the principle of land for peace and in a manner that would guarantee the Palestinian people's right to establish their own independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital, and the right of the other Arab peoples concerned to have their lands restored to them.

The whole world is looking to the Council today to see what urgent measures can be adopted in this direction to affirm its credibility, maintain its prestige and safeguard the aspirations for peace and security in the Middle East.

The President: I thank the representative of Tunisia for his kind words addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): My delegation would first of all like to convey to you, Sir, as you conclude your responsibilities as President of the Council, our deep and sincere appreciation for the able and effective manner in which you have conducted the business of the Council during the very heavily loaded month of June.

Bangladesh would like to join others in thanking the Security Council for the timely convening of this meeting to consider the situation in the occupied Arab territories.

Much work still needs to be done — notwithstanding so many resolutions, United Nations sessions and international conferences — to bring about a just solution to the Palestine question and to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East. We fully share the concern expressed by the representative of the Sudan in his letter to the President of the Security Council in document S/1998/558, dated 23 June 1998, transmitted in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group, regarding the decision of the Israeli Government to expand the boundaries of the municipality of Jerusalem and to create a "municipal umbrella" that would include a number of Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

The situation in the occupied territories is a matter of grave concern to the international community. A single country's continued defiance of international law and all United Nations resolutions and the systematic violations of human rights in the occupied territories are indeed unfortunate. The United Nations has stressed the need to preserve the territorial integrity of all occupied territories and to guarantee the freedom of movement of persons and goods in the territories, including the removal of restrictions into and from East Jerusalem and freedom of movement to and from the outside world.

The United Nations has also demanded immediate and full cessation of construction in all Israeli settlement activities, as well as of all illegal measures and actions in Jerusalem. To our utter disappointment, Israel has not only paid scant attention to the demands of the international community, but has continued its illegal measures and actions that violate the territorial integrity of the occupied territories and impose restrictions on the freedom of movement of persons and goods.

It is all the more regrettable that recently the Israeli Government approved a programme to strengthen Israel's illegal hold on Jerusalem. This programme, if implemented, would expand the border of Jerusalem and extend the municipal authority over some Jewish settlements in the West Bank under the "municipal umbrella".

This is unacceptable. Bangladesh calls upon the Security Council and the international community to have Israel refrain from this gross violation of international law and the relevant resolutions on Jerusalem adopted by this body. We reiterate our full support for the decisions of the United Nations with regard to the legal status, demographic composition and character of Jerusalem.

Israeli settlements in the occupied territories have always been a source of tension, as these settlements violate the land rights of the people under occupation. Unfortunately, Israel, in defiance of United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolutions ES-10/2, ES-10/3 and ES-10/4, continues to pursue repressive policies in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. These resolutions demand immediate and full cessation of construction in Jebel Abu Ghneim and of all other Israeli settlement activities, as well as of all illegal measures and actions in Jerusalem. The resolutions also underline the obligation of the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention to ensure respect of the Convention by Israel.

Bangladesh is concerned at Israel's flagrant violation of human rights and its imposition of the instrument of oppression against the Palestinian people under the pretext of security considerations. Retaliation for individual offences is taking the form of collective punishment, such as blockading, demolition of houses, confiscation of property, deportation and the conduct of collective searches. Bangladesh is watching with concern the developments regarding the systematic campaign being carried out by Israel to demoralize the people of the occupied territories, particularly the Palestinians, with a view to perpetuating its illegal occupation under various pretexts.

Bangladesh is committed, by its Constitution, to supporting oppressed peoples throughout the world. Thus, we have consistently expressed our strong solidarity with our Palestinian brethren, always and everywhere, particularly at the United Nations and in all of the major international forums. My delegation would like to stress the need for full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which form the basis of the Middle East Peace process, and the need for immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, including the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank and the commencement of the negotiations on the final settlement.

Bangladesh calls upon the international community to re-inject momentum into the peace process and to deploy all the necessary efforts and initiatives to bring the peace process back on track and to ensure its continuity and success.

We believe that it is absolutely necessary to end all illegal measures and actions by Israel in the interest of restoring mutual confidence and promoting peace. It cannot be over-emphasized that the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict will constitute a significant contribution to strengthening international peace, security and progress. We call upon all concerned to ensure that the peace accords are complied with fully and negotiations with the Palestinian Authority are pursued in a congenial atmosphere.

We believe that the peace process can be effectively advanced by the withdrawal of all troops from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, stopping settlement in those areas with immediate effect and allowing the Palestinian diaspora to return to their homeland.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the United Nations has an abiding responsibility in resolving the problems arising from the illegal occupation by Israel, as foreign occupation in itself constitutes a flagrant violation of international law. The people of Palestine are seeking protection under international law and the establishment of a sovereign, independent State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital. Bangladesh expresses total solidarity with them.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his warm remarks addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Al-Ahmed (Saudi Arabia)(*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Council presidency for this month, and I wish you full success in the performance of your duties. I would also like to express our appreciation to your predecessor for the great role he played as the President of the Security Council last month.

If the Palestinian problem represents the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict, then the issue of Holy Jerusalem is

at the heart of that problem and is the pivotal element for dealing with the peace process depends on it. The future of the peace process depends on it.

We are gravely concerned to see how the Israeli authorities continue to take actions and measures with the intention of altering Holy Jerusalem's demographic and structural character and attempting to change its Arab character and to Judaize the city and its legal, historical, religious and cultural reality.

This is a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Hague Convention of 1907. These acts and measures also adversely influence the negotiations on the future of Jerusalem, which are supposed to take place when the final status of the city is addressed.

The Holy City of Jerusalem is of the utmost importance to the Arab and Muslim worlds, as well as to the world community and the three monotheistic religions in general. That is why the illegal Israeli policies and practices in Jerusalem are highly dangerous.

The Israeli Government's approval of the plan to expand the boundaries of the municipality of Jerusalem and its jurisdiction is designed to strengthen Israel's grip on the city and the neighbouring areas and to isolate the city from the rest of the West Bank in a series of illegal policies and acts, notwithstanding the fact that the international community and the Security Council have issued clear resolutions declaring such policies illegal, null and void. In addition, the international community has demanded that Israel desist from such policies and practices. Despite all these clear signals, the Israeli authorities continue their dangerous practices and policies in the occupied Palestinian territories, disregarding every convention and recognizing no right, as if no deterrent could make them revert to observing legal norms.

Some of the most continually destabilizing factors in the occupied territories are manifest in the Israeli Government's pursuit of its provocative policies and practices in violation of international law and legal resolutions. One can only imagine how dangerous this would be within Holy Jerusalem. The city is the first *kiblah* and the third-holiest place for Muslims, and the center of Muslims' attention. They will not be satisfied until all their rights are restored to them in this Holy City. The announcement by the Israeli Government that it intends to tighten its illegal control of the city of Jerusalem, despite all Arab, Islamic and international warnings, constitutes a new challenge to the international community and will negatively affect the peace process and the future of peace and stability in the region.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia affirms that no lasting peace will be achieved in the Middle East without a just solution to the issue of the Holy City of Jerusalem in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which demand Israel's withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967, and resolution 252 (1968), which deals with Jerusalem. Accordingly, the future of the Middle East and peace in that region are in the hands of the international community. Unless the international community moves to save this peace by demanding that Israel cease its settlement practices and policies in the city of Jerusalem, the peace process in the Middle East and the integrity of the agreements already signed between parties to the conflict will be seriously threatened, since this behaviour affects the most important issue in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

As we express our grave concern over this decision, we affirm that the Israeli plan to expand the boundaries of the municipality of the Holy City of Jerusalem will shatter the peace process and may be the straw that breaks the back of peace, because the West Bank is not outside the city of Jerusalem. Thus, the expansion of Jerusalem eastward, westward, northward or southward — or even skyward and underground — is still unacceptable, contravenes international treaties and resolutions, and will not be accepted by the Arab and Muslim worlds.

The Government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques considers that the decision of the current Israeli Government to expand the boundaries of the municipality of Jerusalem is illegal and constitutes a dangerous violation of international conventions and agreements. This decision reaffirms the continuation of the Israeli Government's plans to Judaize the city of Jerusalem and efface its Arab and Islamic character. Saudi Arabia also believes that such policies and practices contribute to increasing tension and undermine the credibility of and confidence in the Israeli Government in the context of the peace process.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, denounces and rejects Israel's ongoing irresponsible behaviour in one of the most delicate and sensitive aspects of the peace process. We also emphasize the extreme gravity of this decision and ask the Security Council to make every effort necessary to ensure that Israel, as the occupying

Power, will desist from these policies and practices, and in particular will completely halt all settlement activity in Arab Jerusalem. Failure to achieve this will plunge the region back into a spiral of conflict, tension and instability.

We reiterate our belief that the Security Council, as the organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security, is obligated to take the necessary concrete measures to stop the Israeli violations in the Holy City of Jerusalem. Israeli violations of international law and the resolutions of the Security Council must cease forthwith.

We are hopeful that the Security Council will assume its responsibilities with regard to the Holy City of Jerusalem so as to prove to the entire world that it is on the side of right.

The President: I thank the representative of Saudi Arabia for the kind words he addressed to me and my predecessor.

The next speaker is the representative of Iraq. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hamdoon (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I am pleased at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I should also like to congratulate you on the utmost efficiency with which you have conducted the work of the Council.

We welcome the convening of this meeting to discuss a situation that seriously threatens international peace and security: the question of Jerusalem and Palestine. Israel's measures to Judaize Jerusalem and to efface its Arab identity fall within its expansionist plan aimed at acquiring Arab territories by force. Jerusalem, in particular, has a special religious and historical significance, not only for Arabs and Palestinians, but for the Islamic and Christian worlds as a whole.

It is where the prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven, and it is the cradle of Christianity. Therefore, trying in any way to alter its identity, legal status or demographic composition represents a clear challenge to the feelings of those in both the Islamic and Christian worlds, in addition to being a clear violation of Security Council resolutions.

The international community calls upon the Security Council, which bears responsibility under the Charter, to pay sufficient attention to that issue and give it due importance and to adopt as soon as possible measures to stop the Judaization of that Holy City.

The Security Council must face a fact that can no longer be denied or ignored: since 1990 its practices have been characterized — even pervaded — by selectivity of criteria, double standards and the use of the machinery of the Council for narrow self-interest. A clear example is the way in which the Council deals with the Palestinian question in general and the issue of Jerusalem in particular. We have been and are still being told by a permanent member of the Council that the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict have no place on the agenda of the Council. That country has matched words with deeds, and during the past few years has prevented the Council from examining the question of Palestine and Jerusalem. When the Council has considered that question in the past, that country has used the veto to abort the adoption of any serious measure by the Council. Yet we all know that there is nothing more dangerous to international peace and security than the expansionist policy of Israel, coupled with its possession of all weapons of mass destruction, including more than 200 nuclear warheads.

It is a painful irony that the representative of that permanent member of the Council has in the past week insisted on refusing to allow the Council to consider the question of Jerusalem, while at the same time insisting that it discuss press allegations that there has been a lack of compliance by Iraq with Security Council resolution 833 (1993). That representative also insisted that the Council discuss, and the President of the Council ask the Ambassador of Iraq to explain, an Iraqi letter responding to press statements made by the assistant of the Secretary of State that represented a clear interference in the internal affairs of Iraq and a provocation and incitement to overthrow its Government.

The international community expressed anger and condemnation over the Israeli decision on 21 June 1998 to expand the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, a decision that represents a tangible violation of Security Council resolutions. It also represents a clear contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. In responding to the wish of the international community, the Council should therefore adopt a resolution condemning the Israeli laws and the process of confiscating occupied Arab territories and should force the occupying Power to stop all of its programmes and

plans for building settlements and to demolish those settlements that have already been established.

If the Council prevaricates over adopting a just resolution to deter the aggressor, it will only lead to a further weakening of its credibility — and its credibility is already in a pitiful state right now. It would also lead to the immeasurable deterioration of the fragile situation in the area and thereby severely jeopardize international peace and security.

The President: I thank the representative of Iraq for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kuwait. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to express our appreciation for your remarkable efforts, Mr. President, in conducting the Council's business for this month, which has been fraught with meetings and discussions on many different important issues relating directly to international peace and security. I also wish to express our appreciation for the efforts of Ambassador Mahugu for his successful conduct of the Council's business and wise guidance of its affairs last month.

The Council is meeting today to consider a grave and important issue that is endangering peace and security in the region of the Middle East: the issue of occupied Jerusalem, which is at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Security Council and the General Assembly have already adopted many resolutions on this important and delicate issue. Regrettably, those resolutions have not been implemented or even respected by Israel, the occupying Power. Successive Israeli Governments have not only ignored the international legally binding resolutions, disregarding them completely, but have challenged the resolutions and adopted provocative policies aimed at perpetuating their occupation of the Arab territories in general and of the city of Jerusalem in particular, in an attempt to erase its identity and change its demographic nature and status as a Holy City for the monotheistic religions.

The most recent decision, taken by the Israeli Government on 21 June and aimed at expanding the municipal boundaries of the city of Jerusalem to include the settlements surrounding the city and vast areas of land in the West Bank, is yet further testimony of Israel's persistence in violating and breaching international legally binding resolutions and of its total disregard for and lack of commitment to the bilateral agreements signed with the Palestinian Authority within the framework of the peace process.

For two years the peace process has been in a state of paralysis, if not regression. There have been doubts and fears that it might not be possible to continue the process and to preserve the few gains that have been made since it was launched in Madrid in 1991. The current Israeli Government has left no room for doubt that its practices and policies will lead to a failure of the peace process and a return to an atmosphere of tension and instability in the region.

Optimism is gradually fading, replaced by disappointment at the diminishing possibility of establishing a just and lasting peace. A lack of confidence prevails among the parties most concerned with the peace process. The international community should take a stand that would deter the Israeli Government and require it to put an end to these policies and practices, in order to revitalize the peace process through a reaffirmation of its commitment to the framework of the Madrid Conference based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

In this context, and proceeding from our keen interest in the success of the peace process and the need to support and maintain it, we would like to reaffirm the following points.

First, Kuwait strongly condemns the decision by the Israeli Government to expand the municipal boundaries of the city of Jerusalem, as this is a clear and explicit violation of internationally binding resolutions and in particular resolution 252 (1968), which considers any acts taken by Israel with regard to Jerusalem as null and void. We demand that Israel reverse that decision and desist from its policies aimed at the Judaization of the city.

Secondly, we demand that Israel, the occupying Power, recommit itself to abiding by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and apply those provisions to all the territories it has been occupying since 1967, including Jerusalem.

Thirdly, we demand that Israel desist from carrying out any illegal measures or settlement activities that are

aimed only at imposing a *fait accompli*, and we demand also that it abide by the agreements reached with the Palestinian Authority with regard to these issues, which should be considered within the framework of the final status negotiations.

Fourthly, Kuwait fully supports the Palestinian people and their inalienable and legitimate right to establish their own independent State on their own land, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Fifthly, we would like to reaffirm the importance of giving momentum to the peace process on all tracks, in particular the Lebanese and Syrian tracks, and to stand firm in the face of Israeli intransigence, which seeks to achieve security without giving up land.

Israel's unconditional withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), is the only guarantee of peace and security for all the countries of the region.

In conclusion, we would like to call upon the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to uphold its responsibility to maintain international peace and security and to stand firm in the face of Israeli policies and practices in order to compel the Israeli Government to respect internationally binding resolutions and to abide by the bilateral agreements reached with the Palestinian Authority within the framework of the peace process.

We would like also to call upon the sponsors of the peace process — the Russian Federation and the United States of America in particular — to redouble their efforts to revitalize the peace process and avoid the possibility of its failure in a manner that would achieve a just and lasting peace in the region, leading to a complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan, southern Lebanon and its western areas, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The President: I thank the representative of Kuwait for the kind words he addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Oman. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Sameen (Oman) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like at the outset to convey to you, Sir, my most sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Without a doubt, your diplomatic skills and your wisdom augur well for the success of the Council's deliberations. I should like also to congratulate Ambassador Mahugu for the remarkable manner in which he steered the work of the Council last month, with the assistance of his colleagues.

The Council is meeting today to consider a very serious and important question. Indeed, the decision on 21 June by the Israeli Council of Ministers to expand the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem to include the neighbouring settlements and the West Bank, the destruction of houses and the expulsion of inhabitants represent escalating measures aimed at enabling the Israeli Government to strengthen its hold over the Holy City of Jerusalem, thereby jeopardizing the final phase of the negotiations.

In view of the special and sensitive status of Jerusalem and its status in the three major religions, the Security Council has adopted 16 resolutions on behalf of the international community. Through these resolutions, it has reaffirmed that all measures and arrangements taken by Israel as the occupying Power, including illegal administrative decisions and arrangements, to alter the legal status and demographic composition of the city are null and void and without any legal validity.

Moreover, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 is applicable to all territories occupied by Israel in 1967, including Jerusalem. The Hague Convention of 1907 also applies to all those territories, including Jerusalem.

The measures taken by the Israeli Government to expand the municipal boundaries of the city of Jerusalem and to expand the "municipal umbrella" to include certain Jewish settlements in the West Bank represent a flagrant violation of the principles underlying the peace process and of internationally binding resolutions. These measures jeopardize the tireless peace efforts that have been deployed over the past decade and risk igniting an infernal cycle of conflict and instability.

Since Madrid, the peace process has registered major achievements.

The Arab world has long viewed the peace process as a strategic option and has worked sincerely to

implement the process. From the very outset, my country has chosen that option because it is convinced that peace is imperative for all the peoples and States of the region, including Israel.

We are profoundly disturbed to see the peace process threatened in this way owing to Israel's lack of respect for agreed principles and for peace agreements. This is not Israel's first violation of the peace process: it has continued to pursue its settlements policy and has not fulfilled commitments it entered into. Israel's failure to fulfil its commitments and its continued pursuit of the settlement policy have deadlocked the peace process. The present impasse is a direct result of these arrogant policies. The latest decision by Israel is but one in a long series of violations. Yet the road to peace is clearly and unequivocally marked.

My country calls upon all countries with influence, in particular the co-sponsors of the peace process and the States members of the European Union, to do their utmost to help ensure the success of the peace process, and to bring pressure to bear on Israel to comply with its commitments. While we are convinced of the importance of dialogue and direct negotiations between the parties concerned, the current deadlock in the peace process, and the gravity of the Israeli decision, pose a threat that could bring about the collapse of the peace process, which could in turn have grave consequences for international peace and security.

We therefore call upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility and urgently to adopt a firm resolution declaring the Israeli measures to be illegal and urging that country to renounce its policies. My delegation would support such a draft resolution and believes that the text being considered is commensurate with the gravity of the situation and of the Israeli decision. The text is balanced and non-confrontational. We hope that it can be adopted by consensus and that it will consolidate the Middle East peace process.

The President: I thank the representative of Oman for the kind words he addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker is the representative of Mauritania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I wish at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and to thank you for chairing today's open debate, which in our view is of the greatest importance. I wish also to thank the other members of the Security Council for agreeing to convene this meeting to discuss the new Israeli plan to expand the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem. This situation shows once again that the United Nations and the Security Council must shoulder their responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security in the sensitive region of the Middle East.

The decision taken by the Israeli cabinet on 21 June 1998 to expand the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem to include adjacent settlements and large tracts of the West Bank would change the characteristics of Jerusalem and alter its status as a city that is sacred to all revealed religions. It would tighten Israel's grip on the city, eradicate its Arab identity and change its demographic composition and its character. This would be a violation not only of international law — including the Hague Rules of 1907 and the fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949 — but also of Security Council resolutions 252 (1968), 476 (1980) and 478 (1980). By all of these, Israel's measures in Jerusalem are deemed to be without legal basis and are therefore invalid.

Members no doubt recall the decision adopted by Israel early last year to establish a new settlement at Jebel Abu Ghneim in East Jerusalem. This led to tensions in the occupied Palestinian territories and to the stalling of the Middle East peace process. As the Security Council was unable in the course of two meetings to adopt a resolution on this item, the General Assembly convened its tenth emergency special session on 24 April 1997, and adopted a resolution calling for the immediate and full cessation of the construction in Jebel Abu Ghneim and of all other Israeli settlement activities, as well as of all illegal measures and actions in Jerusalem. In view of Israel's lack of compliance with that resolution, the tenth emergency special session was resumed on three occasions, when the Assembly adopted further resolutions condemning the settlement policies.

Israel's continued defiance of the will of the international community and its continued refusal to implement the resolutions of the tenth emergency special session, added to its new plan to expand the boundaries of Jerusalem, oblige the international community to adopt additional measures to compel Israel to respect international law and United Nations resolutions, in accordance with the Charter.

We call for the adoption of an unambiguous position reflecting the will of the international community, which rejects these policies and the settlements policy. We call for the convening of an international conference of parties to the Geneva Convention on measures to enforce the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, in accordance with the resolutions of the tenth emergency special session.

The dangerous deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and in the Middle East in general threatens to destroy all efforts to bring about a just and lasting peace. Mauritania supports a comprehensive, just peace in the Middle East based on the outcome of the Madrid Conference, on the principle of land for peace, and on binding international resolutions. We call upon the co-sponsors of the peace process to shoulder their responsibilities and to prevail upon the Israeli Government to respect the agreements it has signed, and to make efforts on all tracks of the peace process. This is imperative both for the region and for the world at large, and we should all work to achieve it.

The President: I thank the representative of Mauritania for the kind words he addressed to me and to the other members of the Security Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): The Indonesian delegation welcomes the convening of this formal meeting of the Security Council, for it provides an opportunity for Member States to express their views on an issue which has historically preoccupied our Organization.

During the past few months, we have witnessed a steady deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories, characterized by an increasing tension that has been aggravated by a stalemate in the peace process. The hope engendered by the international community that the provisions of the peace accords would be scrupulously implemented are in jeopardy, as the Government of Israel persists in its refusal to honour its obligations and commitments. This is incompatible with the norms of international conduct and principles of justice. Consequently, the peace process remains paralysed due to Israel's intensification of its provocative policies and practices. Foremost among those are the establishment of new settlements, the expansion of existing settlements, the building of roads and other auxiliary sites adjacent to and between settlements, the issuance of plans for the creation of new settler units and the revocation of residency rights and confiscation of identity cards of Palestinians living in Jerusalem.

Further compounding the already volatile situation is the recent unilateral and arbitrary decision taken by Israel to expand the city of Jerusalem's administrative and political control beyond its borders, in total violation of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions pertaining to Jerusalem. This is a calculated and cynical plan to consolidate Israel's claim to the Holy City as a united and eternal capital. It pre-empts the outcome of the permanent status negotiations by changing the legal status and demographic composition of Jerusalem. Thus, it threatens to further undermine the peace process, with serious repercussions not only for the Middle East but also beyond it.

The Security Council cannot remain indifferent and passive to the series of Israeli onslaughts on the peace process, as we have a vital stake in ensuring that this region will not relapse into a flashpoint of crisis fraught with far-reaching consequences. In this regard, we laud the efforts for peace undertaken by the parties involved and their perseverance in the face of formidable obstacles erected by Israel. The peace process must indeed move forward and be made irreversible.

For this to materialize, Israel must fully observe the agreements already reached and negotiate in good faith on the remaining key issues on the basis of a recognition of the right of the Palestinians to an independent State with al-Quds Al-Sharif as their capital.

My delegation also wishes to reiterate that the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people is an essential prerequisite for a durable and comprehensive peace in that region. In the attainment of this objective, the Security Council must ensure the unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all occupied territories, in accordance with its resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

The Indonesian delegation deems it essential that the Security Council, as the body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, send a clear and unambiguous message to Israel to end its illegal policies and actions. What is at stake is not only the future of a nation, but also our shared vision of a Middle East region transformed from an arena of war,

devastation and antagonisms to one of peace, cooperation and shared prosperity.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): With your kind permission, Mr. President, the Malaysian delegation would like to join the Council and others in expressing our deep sorrow and heartfelt condolences over the untimely death of Maître Alioune Blondin Beye and his colleagues, all of whom had dedicated themselves to the cause of international peace and security. Maître Beye's death is a great loss not only to his family and country, but also to the international community.

Malaysia remains concerned over Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Arab territories. Despite international condemnation in the recent past, the Israeli Government remains unrepentant. Its policy on the expansion of settlements and the application of administrative measures, including the classification of Arab residents of Jerusalem as resident aliens or, in certain cases, foreign immigrants, would complete the encirclement of Arab-populated East Jerusalem, cutting it off from the rest of the West Bank.

The latest decision by the Israeli Government on 21 June 1998 to expand the municipal borders of Jerusalem to include the surrounding settlements and extensive areas in the West Bank is another blatant act of provocation and a gross violation of international law. The real goal here is clear to all. The Israeli Government is taking another step in its long-term strategy to strengthen irrevocably its hold on Jerusalem, which it has illegally proclaimed as its united and eternal capital.

My delegation cannot accept this unilateral Israeli decision. We see this decision as illegal, invalid and in contravention of international law. It is but another attempt to reinforce previous Israeli efforts to effectively alter the demographic character of the city of Jerusalem in favour of the Jewish population, thereby predetermining the outcome of the final status negotiations on Jerusalem between the parties concerned.

According to General Assembly resolution 181 (II), which partitioned Palestine into a Jewish State and an Arab State, the city of Jerusalem should remain as *corpus separatum* until its final status is determined through negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The occupation of East Jerusalem in June 1967 and the subsequent annexation of the Old City and surrounding areas by Israel have not been recognized internationally. And let us not forget that, in addition to numerous General Assembly resolutions, the Security Council itself has adopted 16 resolutions regarding the city of Jerusalem and has repeatedly declared that all measures and actions taken by Israel which aim at changing the legal status, demographic composition and character of the city are null and void and without any legal validity whatsoever. Malaysia wishes to reiterate that Jerusalem is of great spiritual importance not only to the Jews, but also to the entire Islamic community throughout the world, as it is to Christians everywhere.

My delegation believes that this latest Israeli decision deserves condemnation. This decision amounts to blatant non- compliance with the terms of reference of the Madrid Peace Conference and all relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 252 (1968). This decision is also a clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Hague Convention of 1907. We call on the Israeli Government to immediately rescind the decision. Israel should desist from taking any such unilateral actions which clearly undermine the fragile and stalled peace process. My delegation cannot accept illegal and unilateral measures taken by the Israeli Government which create tension and threaten to further erode the prospects for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace between Palestine and Israel and throughout the Middle East.

By continuously embarking on a provocative course, the Israeli Government, through its unilateral actions, has placed into serious question its own commitment to the peace process. It appears to be intent on reverting to the old ways of taking and keeping what belongs to others, thus further eroding mutual confidence and trust among the parties concerned while delaying the implementation of the peace agreements. My delegation calls upon Israel to join the Palestinians and others concerned to make every effort to revive the peace process. Israel must steadfastly stay the course. While it has the right to be concerned about its security, Israel must also recognize that others similarly have the right to be concerned over their own security. Therefore, we call upon Israel to eschew aggressive behaviour and instead adopt policies designed to bring about long-term prosperity and security both for itself and for its neighbours.

It is now time for Israel to realize that the threats it perceives are a direct consequence of its own policies and actions. Israel cannot flourish at the expense of its neighbours by denying the rightful owners their legitimate rights and lands and by depriving them of these. Security certainly cannot be founded on gross injustice. Israel must have the courage to look beyond the confines of the self-centred and cloistered notion of security and so-called military logic. It must be prepared to build effective partnerships with the Palestinians as well as with all its neighbours and at all levels.

My delegation believes that the Security Council, in carrying out its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should take immediate steps to ensure the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, as well as to promote efforts to encourage the immediate resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. We also urge the co-sponsors of the peace process, which have invested so much effort, to earnestly encourage the Israeli Government to honour its obligations and commitments to the peace agreements, and to continue with those efforts. Malaysia is firmly convinced that security for all countries in the Middle East can only be assured by the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad-Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting of the Security Council. We have full confidence in your leadership and in your efforts to steer the Council's deliberations in such a way that the result will reflect the true view of the international community as a whole on the issue at hand.

History is now repeating itself before our eyes and in our lifetime. Little more than 50 years ego, the Zionists began to move into Palestinian lands. Using every imaginable tactic, including confiscation, intimidation, force and terrorism, they occupied and began to change the status of Palestinian land. The same obstinate policy is now at work against the Holy City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. There is absolutely no change in their policy or the manner in which they implement it. The Israeli leaders continue to have utter disregard for the agony, sorrow, homelessness and bloodshed that their policies and practices have caused millions of innocent Palestinians for more than five decades, and for the volumes of reprimand and condemnation of their policies and practices by international organizations, particularly by the United Nations.

They robbed the Palestinian people of their land some 50 years ago. Now they are in the process of robbing the Palestinians and the entire Muslim nation of their heritage and what they hold to be divine and sacred. The current Israeli programme envisions strengthening and perpetuating Israel's illegal occupation of the Holy City. This programme includes the creation of an umbrella municipality with administrative power over the Holy City and nearby towns in the occupied territories, as well as over some Jewish settlements in the West Bank. It also includes the speedy construction of roads and other infrastructure in those settlements. This programme is engineered to alter the status of the Holy City by changing its demographic composition. It is a practical move to annex illegally more of the occupied Palestinian territories to the municipality covering the Holy City, which had already been expanded illegally and in violation of the rules of international law and of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

In this connection, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in his capacity as Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, issued a statement on 25 June warning about the repercussions of this Israeli plan, which reads in part:

> "Undoubtedly, this latest act by Israel will further exacerbate the Middle East crisis, for, among other implications, it desecrates the sanctity of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, a sanctity which, because of the depth of psychological attachment and spiritual affinity of Muslims to this land of Divine Prophets, has its roots entrenched in their souls."

The international community in general and the Islamic world in particular are deeply concerned about this new Israeli plan, and about the new decision to initiate new settlement activities in Jabal Abu Ghneim. Last year the Security Council was called upon to shoulder its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security by putting an end to the construction of Jewish settlements there. The Council met on 5 and 6 March 1997 to consider the situation created by Israeli plans for new settlement activities in Jabal Abu Ghneim.

But regrettably, the draft resolution was subjected to a veto, and the Council was thus prevented from discharging its constitutional responsibility on this crucial issue. The inaction of the Security Council emboldened Israel to defy the wish of the international community, reflected in General Assembly resolution 51/223, which was adopted after the frustration of the case before the Security Council. The matter was put before the Security Council once more, on 21 March 1997, when the exercise of the veto again barred the Security Council from taking a decision, thus giving rise to profound international disappointment.

Lastly, the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly was convened on the basis of General Assembly resolution 377 (V) of 3 November 1950, entitled "Uniting for peace". At the tenth emergency special session, the Assembly adopted four resolutions on illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory in 1997 and 1998. These resolutions, like others, have been totally disregarded by the Israeli regime, as if they did not exist and as if the international community was indifferent to its illegal activities.

Despite such intensive developments and the series of new resolutions on this subject, the announcement of the aforementioned programme by the highest-level Israeli official clearly illustrates Israel's total defiance of the international community and the contempt in which the community's views are held by the Israeli regime. The disdain of the Israeli leaders for the principles of international law and the decisions of the United Nations is no secret to anyone in this Chamber. It is commonly acknowledged, deplored and condemned, but very little, if anything, is done about it.

The present deliberation in the Council of this latest Israeli act of lawlessness, which has spurred international outrage, is another test to determine whether the Security Council will discharge its obligation on behalf of the general membership of the Organization and thus gain the credibility that it constitutionally deserves. The international community expects the Security Council to condemn the Israeli decision of 21 June 1998, demand that it be rescinded and adopt practical measures to counter the organized Israeli steps to alter the historical and demographic status of the Holy City, so as to enable the adherents of Judaism, Christianity and Islam to have unhindered and free access to it.

The President: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Colombia. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Galindo (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Let me begin by expressing our satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, preside over the Security Council's deliberations this month.

My delegation wishes to stress the importance of this debate on the question of the situation in the occupied Arab territories, to which it attaches special significance. We believe that this debate is particularly relevant in view of recent events associated with the matter under consideration.

The question of Jerusalem has been given constant attention by the international community, and in particular by the Non-Aligned Movement, which has referred to it on many occasions. At the Ministerial Meeting held last year in New Delhi, the Foreign Ministers of States members of the Movement reaffirmed all the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly on Jerusalem as an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territories, and demanded the implementation, in particular, of Security Council resolutions 252 (1968), 465 (1980), 478 (1980), 1073 (1996) and General Assembly resolution 51/223. They deemed that the measures aimed at altering the legal, geographical and demographic status of Jerusalem, along with other actions in violation of these resolutions, are null and void.

In the Final Communiqué adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau, held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 18 to 20 May this year, the Foreign Ministers and heads of delegation of the Non-Aligned Movement reiterated their support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to its own homeland and independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital. At that time, they once again repeated their demand that Israel withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and the other Arab territories occupied since 1967.

The Ministers and heads of delegation of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement also reaffirmed their position on occupied East Jerusalem, the illegal

settlements and the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to all occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. In this connection, they demanded strict compliance with the Security Council's resolutions on this matter.

The Ministers of the States members of the Movement reiterated in Cartagena their support for the recommendations contained in the resolutions adopted at the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly — resolutions ES-10/2, ES-10/3, ES-10/4 and ES-10/5 — including, *inter alia*, the recommendation to convene a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to discuss how to enforce compliance with the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and to ensure respect by Israel of the Convention by assuming their collective responsibility in accordance with its article 1.

The President: I thank the representative of Colombia for her kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish to congratulate the delegation of Kenya on its presidency and express the hope that the representative of Portugal enjoys a well-deserved rest this evening after having so successfully presided over the meetings of this Council for almost a month.

More than three decades after the Security Council's adoption of resolution 242 (1967), Israel continues its illegal occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories, in open defiance of the norms of international law and the provisions of the many resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and this Council.

At its most recent regular session and at its tenth emergency special session, the General Assembly considered in detail the deplorable situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Security Council also held several meetings last year on this question, especially on the decision of the Government of Israel to begin building a new settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim, in the south of East Jerusalem. Only the veto of one permanent member prevented the Council from adopting resolutions on this matter on 7 and 21 March 1997.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has reiterated that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, is deteriorating alarmingly, in particular with respect to Israeli settlements and the continued blockades, which harm the Palestinians economically, violate their human rights and provoke increased violence and tension.

Despite the urgent appeals of the United Nations, the settlement policy, instead of disappearing, is being strengthened. More housing is being built in existing settlements, encircling roads are being constructed to link them and the Palestinians of Jerusalem are being denied residency rights.

The Government of Israel, in a further step in the wrong direction, has recently announced a new programme to strengthen and expand its illegal control over Jerusalem. This programme is a flagrant violation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and of the many resolutions adopted by the Security Council and by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session, and is placing the peace process in the Middle East in extreme danger.

Cuba resolutely condemns these and other actions, which are totally devoid of legal validity and represent a clear challenge to the international community. General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the legal status of Jerusalem must be respected.

Holding this open debate is the most basic duty of the Security Council in dealing with the serious developments in the occupied Palestinian territories. The legitimate right of Member States to request the Council to hold open debates so as to deal with questions of international peace and security can in no way be questioned or subject to any conditions.

Furthermore, it is worrying that the Council is unable immediately to adopt a resolution that reflects the overwhelming majority position of United Nations Member States and of members of the Security Council on the issue under discussion, a position that has been reaffirmed once again today.

We wonder how long we will have to continue to witness the double standard adopted by some permanent members of the Security Council, which look after their national political interests, promoting or blocking as they see fit decisions on issues considered by the Council,

thereby exploiting the prerogatives afforded them by the anachronistic right of veto.

The Security Council considers issues that are not within its competence and interferes with the mandate of the General Assembly, while at the same time making inexplicable omissions. Regrettably, the item under discussion is an excellent example of this tendency.

The Security Council has an opportunity to enhance its credibility and demonstrate its adherence to the mandate conferred upon it and to the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations. As the body entrusted with guaranteeing international peace and security, the Council has an obligation to adopt specific measures to put a stop to ongoing actions that violate international law and its own resolutions.

In conclusion, I should like once again to express the resolute commitment of Cuba to the cause of the Palestinian people and the achievement of its inalienable rights.

The President: I thank the representative of Cuba for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Ali Al-Salafi, Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Office of the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Salafi (League of Arab States) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like at the outset to extend to you, Sir, my congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I am also pleased to express my appreciation to Ambassador Mahugu, the Permanent Representative of Kenya, for his efforts in presiding over the Council last month.

The question of Jerusalem is one of the most important issues that was deferred to the final status negotiations by the agreements concluded in Oslo in 1993 between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli Government. The decision by the Israeli Government on 21 June to annex to the municipality of Israel several villages west of the city and some of the settlements in the Palestinian territories is designed to tighten the Israeli grip on the Holy City and to separate it from the other Palestinian territories. The objective of this decision is to Judaize Jerusalem, eliminate its Arab character and alter its demographic composition.

The League of Arab States is concerned about these measures adopted by the Israeli Government, which represent a clear violation of the agreements reached between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli Government. The Israeli plan to expand the Holy City, whether to the east or to the west, represents a clear violation of international legitimacy as established in the 16 resolutions of the Security Council on Jerusalem, especially 252 (1968) and 267 (1969), adopted some 30 years ago.

Security Council resolution 267 (1969), provides, in paragraph 4

> "that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel which purport to alter the status of Jerusalem, including expropriation of land and properties thereon, are invalid and cannot change that status;"

and in paragraph 7

> "that, in the event of a negative response or no response from Israel, the Security Council shall reconvene without delay to consider what further action should be taken in this matter".

In addition, the Security Council, in resolution 476 (1980), decided that, *inter alia*, all measures adopted by Israel to change the character and status of Jerusalem are null and void; and in resolution 478 (1980) that, *inter alia*, the Council refused to recognize the "basic law".

It is high time for the Council to assume its responsibilities for international peace and security in accordance with the Charter and to examine this issue. With regard to the status of Holy Jerusalem, it is clear that Israel is trying to surround Jerusalem with three settlement belts, leading to a decrease in the percentage of Arab citizens, who in East Jerusalem now make up 47 per cent, as opposed to 53 per cent for Jewish citizens. If those figures are combined with figures for the whole of Jerusalem, the result is a three-to-one ratio in favour of Jewish citizens.

As for the possession of Palestinian territory, when the Balfour Declaration was made in 1917, Jews owned 4 per cent of Jerusalem, Arabs 94 per cent and foreigners 2 per cent. Now Jews own 84 per cent of the territory of

Jerusalem, with Arabs owning 14 per cent and foreigners 2 per cent. With regard to the possession of territory in East Jerusalem, Jews now own 74 per cent of the territory and Arabs 26 per cent. Israel has seized most of that territory by force.

That brief comparison of the situation in Jerusalem clarifies the situation. The programme and plan adopted by Israel on 21 June are aimed at expanding the boundaries of Holy Jerusalem to 184 square kilometres — in 1967 it comprised only 7 square kilometres — so as to tighten the grip of the municipal authority of Jerusalem as part of the Israeli plan to Judaize Holy Jerusalem.

Arab States have adopted peace as a strategic option. This was affirmed at the Summit of Arab States in Cairo in 1996 and was based on the desire to make it possible for the area to avoid more wars and more pain and to develop economically, culturally and in a way that would make it civilized.

The Israeli Government, however, continued its practice of settlement expansion in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Holy Jerusalem, in violation of international law, United Nations resolutions and the agreements signed with the Palestinian Authority. The League of Arab States, in view of the stalling of the peace process as a consequence of Israel's decisions and practices which constitute negative indications, calls upon the sponsors of the peace process — the United States and the Russian Federation — and all peace-loving countries to take a stand against the irresponsible Israeli measures.

We call upon the United States to maintain its positive response in the wake of the declaration of that settlement plan in order to maintain the peace and security of the area in the interest of all the countries of the region, and to move the peace process forward towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, because a continuation of the Israeli policies and practices will plunge the area into the cycle of conflict once again.

We would like to refer to the 1991 American letter of assurances wherein the United States does not recognize the annexation of East Jerusalem or the municipal expansion and encourages all parties to avoid unilateral measures that would increase tension, make negotiations more difficult and pre-empt their final outcome.

The city of Holy Jerusalem is important to the Arabs as well as to millions of Muslims and Christians throughout the world. The League of Arab States expresses its appreciation for the clear international consensus which condemns the Israeli programme and plans. It calls on all to support Arab rights in the face of Israeli provocations, which represent a clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. This plan aims at seizing the territory by force and eliminating the rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, as well as foreclosing the possibility of any peaceful solution in the region. We therefore called for an urgent meeting of the Security Council so that the Council could assume its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter of the United Nations and on the basis of the resolutions of the Council. The Council should take measures against the plan adopted by the Israeli Cabinet on 21 June. This would send a clear message to Israel to desist from its practices, which represent a contravention of international legitimacy and the position adopted by the international community.

The President: I thank the representative of the League of Arab States for the kind words he addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Mokhtar Lamani, Permanent Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, to whom the Security Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lamani (Organization of the Islamic Conference) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Security Council is meeting again today to consider how to deal with Israel's non-compliance with internationally binding resolutions and the agreements it has signed, in particular those concerning the Holy City of Jerusalem.

The Israeli Cabinet unanimously adopted, on 21 June 1998, a plan on the expansion of the city of Jerusalem to include vast areas of land and settlements, which will require the confiscation of thousands of acres and the construction of new roads to link the settlements surrounding Jerusalem. Increasing the size of the city from 108 to 600 square kilometres and increasing the population to 1 million persons will effect a demographic change following which the Palestinians will represent a small minority. The Israeli Government has thus unilaterally decided the demographic and geographic future of the city, flouted the wish of the international community and prejudged the status of Jerusalem.

This Israeli position is not new, though the present Israeli Government has only hastened its implementation. Allow me to draw the Council's attention to the following facts.

The Council has reaffirmed in previous resolutions the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to occupied Jerusalem and other Arab territories occupied since 1967. Deeming actions by the occupying Power to change the status of the city as null and void and legally invalid, the Council, in resolutions 162 (1961) and 250 (1968), requested that Israel desist from parading its military power in Jerusalem, and in resolution 251 (1968) it reaffirmed that demand. However, on 24 May 1998, Israel conducted military parades in celebration of the thirty-first anniversary of its occupation of the city.

The Council, through resolution 252 (1968), reaffirmed the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by military force. However, Israel has continued to confiscate Arab land in Jerusalem and has brought in 70,000 Jewish families. The process is still ongoing, and what is happening in Jebel Abu Ghneim and Ras Al-Amud is but additional, clear testimony to that. Holy Islamic places were not spared, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in the occupying Power's campaign to close the Holy City to those from the West Bank and Gaza seeking to pray. Jewish groups were allowed to enter the territory of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, to dig tunnels and to excavate below the various historic mosques and buildings, destroying the Ghawanmeh gate in the historic wall of Jerusalem and expanding the square of the Al-Buraq Wall.

Repeated condemnation of these actions by the Israeli authorities has not led to any tangible result, and the agreements reached in the framework of the peace process have not been respected, in spite of appeals from all parts of the world, including from the United States, the European Community, the Vatican and others.

Here I should like to reiterate that the international community considers Jerusalem an occupied city and that the agreements on the transitional self-rule signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization should have prevented any party from taking any actions that would affect the final status of the city.

The list of violations and instances of lack of respect for the Council's resolutions is very lengthy, and I believe it is but another link in a chain of further challenges and violations. The Middle East peace process should remain the highest goal being sought by the international community but that process is suffering from a total collapse on all tracks. It is time, therefore, for the Security Council to take the necessary measures to salvage peace. The Council, which bears responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, must take a firm stance that is commensurate with the magnitude and gravity of the violations and challenges by Israel, which is responsible for this grave situation.

Any complacency in deterring Israel would be tantamount to encouraging it to continue in its policy of non-respect for international law and internationally binding resolutions. It would also lead to the end of hopes generated by the Madrid agreements and would return the entire area to the brink of destruction.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Peru in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the representative of Peru to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Guillen (Peru)(*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to express my thanks to you, Mr. President, and to extend my greetings to your predecessor, who presided over this Council with distinction.

There are times when it is necessary to engage in repetition when positions are immovable and when circumstances deteriorate. The Peruvian delegation comes to this meeting to say that there is a situation of considerable deterioration and constant challenge to decisions of the Security Council, of the General Assembly, of other principal organs and of the Organization as a whole.

In the decision adopted in 1947, it was made very clear that the situation of the city of Jerusalem should be that of *corpus separatum*. In accordance with international developments in this matter, we have repeated on many occasions that there should be

international guarantees pertaining to the special status of the city of Jerusalem.

Two proposals submitted to the Security Council were vetoed on 7 March 1997 and on 21 March 1997, despite the will of the majority of the membership of this Council. Because of this, at a special session of the General Assembly at which a resolution was adopted by a vast majority, it was clearly established that the status of Jerusalem was not only a question of, and did not depend solely on, the bilateral agreements between the countries. As was stated in the General Assembly and was expressed in the resolution adopted by a considerable majority, that status should include internationally guaranteed provisions.

The current extension of municipal powers outside the city of Jerusalem is an excessive step that offends the norms and the decisions adopted by these organs of the United Nations of which all States present are members. We believe that such steps will be difficult to rescind in the future if this deliberate policy continues as it has. We believe that it is essential that the Security Council adopt decisions firmly and decisively, and without vetoes, on this matter.

We believe that the status of Jerusalem is not solely a political matter. It is not a bilateral issue, nor is it solely a religious matter. It is a matter of concern to the entire world. It is a matter in which international law and the legal norms of the United Nations are involved.

Several thousand years ago, in the Holy Book, the God of the people of Israel made an appeal that man not act with hostility towards his neighbour, that he not subjugate him, lest he provoke God's wrath. I believe that these words of that God should be present in the conscience of all of us here. I believe it is such an ancient matter that it does not deserve hasty treatment, taboos, hesitation or acts of weakness that detract from the legitimacy of the decisions of this Council.

The President: I thank the representative of Peru for his kind words addressed to me and to my predecessor.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue consideration of the item on the agenda will be fixed in consultations with the members of the Council.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.3901

Security Council

Fifty-third Year

Provisional

3901st Meeting

Thursday, 2 July 1998, 1.10 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Patriota
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Costa Rica	Mr. Sáenz Biolley
	France	Mr. Teixeira da Silva
	Gabon	Mr. Essonghé
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Japan	Mr. Konishi
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Portugal	Mr. Soares
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	Sweden	Mr. Thöresson
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Grainger
	United States of America	Ms. Soderberg

Agenda

The situation in Croatia

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Police Support Group (S/1998/500)

98-85558 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 1.10 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President (*interpretation from Russian*): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of July, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. António Monteiro, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of June 1998, and to his delegation. I am sure I speak for all members of the Security Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Monteiro and his colleagues for the great diplomatic skill with which the Council's business was conducted last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Croatia

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Police Support Group (S/1998/500)

The President (*interpretation from Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Croatia, in which she requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Grčić Polić (Croatia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*interpretation from Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Police Support Group, document S/1998/500.

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/1998/589, which contains the text of a letter dated 29 June 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council.

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General of 11 June 1998 (S/1998/500) pursuant to its resolution 1145 (1997) of 19 December 1997.

"The Security Council notes that the overall security situation in the Danube region is relatively stable. It also notes that the generally satisfactory performance of the Croatian police in the region is largely due to comprehensive monitoring by the United Nations Police Support Group and the special attention paid to the situation by the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia. However, the Council is concerned that, despite the large presence of the Croatian police, ethnically-related incidents, evictions and housing intimidation cases have not been stopped, and that such incidents have increased in the recent period.

"The Security Council expresses its grave concern that a large number of Serb residents and displaced persons have emigrated from the Republic of Croatia since late 1996, mainly because of continued security incidents, ethnically-related intimidation, a dire economic situation, bureaucratic hurdles, discriminatory legislation and a stalled return programme. A continuation of this trend could have a seriously negative effect on the restoration of a multiethnic society in the Republic of Croatia. The Council, therefore, welcomes the adoption by the Government of Croatia, on 20 June 1998, of a nationwide 'Programme for the Return and Accommodation of Displaced Persons, Refugees and Resettled Persons' (S/1998/589) and calls for its prompt and full implementation at all levels, including the abolition of discriminatory property laws and the establishment of effective mechanisms allowing owners to recover their property. It stresses the importance of the prompt and full implementation of the Programme on Reconciliation at all levels throughout Croatia and of preventing and responding to incidents of harassment and unlawful evictions.

"The Security Council reiterates the continuing obligations of the Government of Croatia under the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (S/1995/951, annex) as well as under international conventions and other agreements. It notes with satisfaction that the Government of Croatia has met the majority of its obligations concerning the provision of public services and employment within the public sector, set out in the Basic Agreement. The Council, however, reiterates that a number of obligations have yet to be fulfilled in such areas as the implementation of the Convalidation Law and the Amnesty Law, the functioning of local municipalities and the permanent funding of the Joint Council of Municipalities. In this regard, the Council stresses the significance of the Article 11 Commission, formed under the provisions of article 11 of the Basic Agreement, as a key instrument in encouraging the Government of Croatia to meet its obligations fully and in underscoring continued international commitment to the successful completion of peaceful reintegration.

"The Security Council calls upon the Government of Croatia to improve police response to ethnically-related incidents, evictions and housing intimidation cases and to take other measures to strengthen public confidence in the police, including through public information and police preventive action. In this context, the Council stresses the importance of the implementation of the guidelines issued by the Ministry of the Interior on 9 January 1998 and the institution of a community policing programme by the Ministry.

"The Security Council fully supports the activities of the United Nations Police Support Group and the United Nations Liaison Office in Zagreb. It welcomes the decision of the OSCE Permanent Council of 25 June 1998 to deploy civilian police monitors to assume, from 15 October 1998, the responsibilities of the United Nations Police Support Group. It also welcomes the invitation by the Representative of the Secretary-General to the Head of the OSCE Mission in Croatia to begin planning for the intended transfer of the police monitoring function in the region to the OSCE. It supports the establishment of a timetable for the handover of the functions of the Support Group to the OSCE and agrees with the intention of the Secretary-General to reduce gradually the number of civilian police monitors, under the conditions specified in his report. The Council looks forward to a report by the Secretary-General by mid-September detailing the arrangements for the termination of the Support Group mandate by 15 October 1998."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1998/19.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.3902

Security Council

Fifty-third Year

Provisional

3902nd Meeting
Monday, 13 July 1998, 12.20 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bahrain	Mr. Al-Dosari
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Costa Rica	Mr. Niehaus
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue Réwaka
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Japan	Mr. Konishi
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Portugal	Mr. Soares
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	Sweden	Mr. Lidén
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Gomersall
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Fifth report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Sierra Leone (S/1998/486 and Add.1)

98-85576 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 12.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

Fifth report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Sierra Leone (S/1998/486 and Add.1)

The President (*interpretation from Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Austria, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Khyne-Sam (Sierra Leone) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Manz (Austria) and Mr. Gambari (Nigeria) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*interpretation from Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the fifth report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Sierra Leone, document S/1998/486 and Add.1. Members of the Council also have before them document S/1998/620, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/1998/629, which contains the text of a letter dated 10 July 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The first speaker on my list is the representative of Austria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Manz (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia — and the Associated country Cyprus, as well as the countries of the European Free Trade Association members of the European Economic Area — Liechtenstein and Norway — align themselves with this statement.

The European Union warmly welcomes the decision of the Security Council to establish the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). We fully agree that, through the deployment of military observers, civilian police staff and human rights officers, much-needed impetus can be lent to the vital but still fragile peace and reconciliation process in Sierra Leone. This process deserves the full support of the international community.

The European Union welcomes the significant actions taken by the Government of Sierra Leone towards stabilization in the country. Following its restoration on 10 March 1998, the Government has moved swiftly in order to re-establish an effective administration and the democratic process. The European Union congratulates President Kabbah on the nomination of acknowledged experts in the relevant fields to his Cabinet and the nomination of the Chief Justice, all of whom have been confirmed by the Parliament.

The Government of Sierra Leone has also embarked on the central task of national reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation. We strongly encourage the Government of Sierra Leone to keep to its resolve to adhere to international human rights standards and to ensure that those accused of the gravest crimes against the State and the people of Sierra Leone receive fair trials.

The European Union welcomes the recent announcement of the Government of Sierra Leone that it would grant amnesty to all child soldiers. In this context, we note the important efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict to make Sierra Leone one of the pilot projects in order to respond in a more vigorous and concerted fashion to the needs of children in the context of post-conflict peace-building. On the occasion of his recent visit to Sierra Leone, Special Representative Olara Otunnu identified five areas which require urgent action:

the demobilization and reintegration of child combatants; the resettlement of internally displaced persons; the tracing of families of unaccompanied children; the rehabilitation and support of victims without limbs; and the provision and rehabilitation of medical and educational services. These needs call for an immediate response by the international community.

The European Union welcomes the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone to establish a National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation and we note that a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan — agreed with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the United Nations Development Programme and other donors, and assisted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) — has already been adopted. In this context, the European Union would like to commend the important role that ECOWAS has continued to play towards the peaceful resolution of the crisis. We encourage ECOMOG to proceed in its important efforts to foster peace and stability in Sierra Leone and to closely cooperate with UNOMSIL.

It is the European Union's view that successful national reconstruction and rehabilitation have to be accompanied by regional cooperation. The European Union welcomes the efforts of regional leaders to promote mutual cooperation in the subregion and, particularly, relations between Liberia and Sierra Leone.

In spite of promising developments in the country, the European Union remains deeply concerned about the continued presence of remnants of the ousted junta and members of the Revolutionary United Front in the eastern part as well as in some areas in the north of Sierra Leone. The European Union condemns the continued resistance of these elements against the legitimate Government of Sierra Leone and joins the Secretary-General in calling on them to lay down theirs arms and to surrender immediately. The European Union strongly condemns the mutilations, rapes, looting and all the other atrocities carried out by the rebels. The European Union calls for an immediate end to all violence against the civilian population of Sierra Leone. Any military support being provided to the rebels has to cease. In this context, the European Union stresses the importance that the provisions of resolutions 1132 (1997) and 1171 (1998) be strictly observed and that any action be avoided that might destabilize the situation in Sierra Leone.

The European Union commends the courageous efforts of the United Nations and other international humanitarian personnel who are active in Sierra Leone. We remain concerned for their safety and call on all parties concerned to facilitate the work of the humanitarian agencies.

During the recent crisis in Sierra Leone, the European Union, as a principal donor, continued to provide humanitarian assistance through non-governmental organizations and international agencies. Additional aid is given in the form of an emergency agricultural recovery programme to enable farmers to resume food production activities as soon as possible. The European Union is also providing assistance to Sierra Leone refugees in Guinea, aimed at facilitating the return and reintegration of the refugees as soon as is practically possible.

With the reinstatement of a democratic civilian Government in March 1998, the European Union is preparing to resume programmes suspended last year after the *coup d'état*. Of immediate priority are projects related to institutional support and rehabilitation of the country. Special attention will be given to the reintegration of demobilized soldiers and the demobilization of child combatants, building upon the experience gained in other cases.

The European Union would wish to express its deep appreciation to the Secretary-General and to his Special Envoy, Mr. Francis Okelo, for their tireless efforts aimed at restoring peace and security in Sierra Leone. In this context, the European Union welcomes the intention of the Secretary-General to convene a special conference on 30 July 1998 in New York in order to mobilize international assistance for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, and for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Sierra Leone. The European Union will participate actively in that conference.

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): The establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) by today's draft resolution will be extremely welcome. First, the mission will be only the third peacekeeping operation to have been sent out by the United Nations in over two years. Following the establishment of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) in March this year, this sets an encouraging trend for greater United Nations involvement in Africa.

As in the case of MINURCA, the mandate and shape of the operation to be authorized today also reflects the growing cooperation of the United Nations with regional groupings or organizations and coalitions of States, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report on Africa [S/1998/318]. UNOMSIL's mandate, which tasks United Nations military observers with monitoring the implementation of a national disarmament and demobilization process, which is being conducted by a regional peacekeeping force, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), is a good example of this.

Even more important, this mission is a crucial opportunity for Sierra Leone. We missed a similar opportunity early last year, and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) coup that followed set back the cause of peace and reconstruction against the interests of the country for over a year. Now we have a new chance to contribute to a peaceful settlement of a crisis which has lasted far too long.

The presence of United Nations observers in support of ECOMOG's disarmament activities should help guarantee the impartiality of the national disarmament and demobilization plan and boost confidence in its successful implementation, encouraging fighters to come out from the bush, to give up their weapons and to be reintegrated into national society.

The United Kingdom is glad to have been a strong supporter of this draft resolution, of the people of Sierra Leone and of their legitimate Government. But this draft resolution and the establishment of a peacekeeping operation are not enough. The Government of Sierra Leone is doing its part, through continued progress to re-establish effective administration and to reinforce democratic institutions and the rule of law, and through steps to promote national reconciliation and reconstruction.

We also commend ECOWAS and ECOMOG for what they have achieved in Sierra Leone. We applaud their efforts, at great cost in lives and resources, to restore peaceful and secure conditions throughout the country, and welcome their readiness to ensure the security of United Nations personnel. ECOMOG deserves our gratitude.

But the Government of Sierra Leone, ECOMOG and UNOMSIL need greater support from the international community if this combined strategy for peace and rehabilitation is to succeed. The United Kingdom has donated £2 million to a United Nations Trust Fund for peacekeeping in Sierra Leone. We have also supplied two British military officers to assist the Special Envoy, Mr. Okelo, and are now considering how we can provide further support for UNOMSIL. The United Kingdom has also provided significant emergency aid and longer-term development aid to Sierra Leone.

In this context, we warmly welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to hold a high-level special political conference on Sierra Leone on 30 July to help mobilize urgently needed support for ECOMOG and the Sierra Leonean Government. The United Kingdom pledges its full backing for this initiative; a British minister will attend, and we hope that representatives of many other Member States will do the same.

In the meantime, we urge other United Nations Member States to contribute to the Trust Fund to provide technical and logistical support to ECOMOG, and to support the disarmament and demobilization programme and other development activity in the country.

The intervention of ECOMOG, the creation of the national disarmament and demobilization plan and the forthcoming deployment of UNOMSIL have created the conditions for a decisive change in Sierra Leone. The international community should ensure, not only through the present draft resolution, but through its material support, that Sierra Leone can make the most of that chance.

The President (*interpretation from Russian*): The next speaker is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): Permit me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Although Nigeria left the Security Council as a non-permanent member more than two years ago, my delegation recalls the occasions when you presided over the Council during our tenure; therefore, we are confident that under your able leadership, the deliberations of the Council will be conducted with skill and wisdom and in a manner that will ensure justice and enhance the principles and purposes of the Charter.

The adoption of a draft resolution creating the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) will be a unique milestone in the constructive relationship between the United Nations and

the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) in the efforts to restore peace and security to Sierra Leone. The positive role of ECOWAS and the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in the process of restoring stability at the request of the democratically elected Government of Sierra Leone is well documented and has been acknowledged consistently by the Security Council and its members, including the last speaker. States members of ECOWAS committed substantial human and material resources to the overthrow of the junta in Sierra Leone. The peace plan for Sierra Leone supported by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations was successfully implemented by ECOWAS heads of State.

It was indeed a remarkable occasion when the legitimate Government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was restored to power in Sierra Leone on 10 March 1998. It was, however, obvious that more needed to be done to consolidate peace and stability in Sierra Leone. In this regard, urgent and concrete support in the form of financial, logistical and material resources is needed to enable ECOMOG to defeat the remnants of the junta, who continue to commit unspeakable atrocities in parts of Sierra Leone; this support would assist the process of reconciliation and reconstruction in that country. Furthermore, considerable humanitarian assistance is required for Sierra Leone, as well as for neighbouring countries which continue to host large numbers of refugees.

Recently, at the initiative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, the Chairman of ECOWAS and head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Abdulsalam Abubakar, hosted a meeting between President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone and President Taylor of Liberia, which took place at Abuja on 2 July 1998. The meeting, which was co-chaired by the Chairman of ECOWAS and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, addressed a number of regional and subregional issues, including, in particular, ways in which security and cooperation between the neighbouring States of Liberia and Sierra Leone could be further improved and the role ECOWAS and the United Nations could play in support of such efforts. The communiqué issued at the end of the Abuja mini-summit contains important agreements which should now be implemented in full and without further delay.

It is timely that the United Nations-proposed conference on Sierra Leone has been scheduled for 30 July 1998. The conference would be the appropriate forum to sensitize the international community to peacekeeping activities and to encourage the donation of humanitarian and emergency provisions. The Nigerian delegation, as well as other members of ECOWAS, would join with others to ensure the success of the conference.

Meanwhile, we wish to draw attention to the fact that the Trust Fund that would support peacekeeping efforts in Sierra Leone still requires substantial contributions from Member States of the United Nations, and my delegation, on behalf of ECOWAS, will call on them to make contributions.

Furthermore, concrete assistance from States in the form of logistical and technical support would help the Government of Sierra Leone directly in its quest for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country.

We welcome the recommendation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict, Ambassador Olara Otunnu, that Sierra Leone be recognized as one of the pilot projects for a more effective response to the needs of children in post-conflict peace-building. This recommendation, along with the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone to pursue an effective national response to the fate of children affected by armed conflict, augurs well for the welfare of children suffering as a result of violent conflicts.

It will, however, be an even greater achievement when the international community eventually succeeds in preventing the involvement of and the assault on children and puts an end to the phenomenon of child soldiers in many parts of the world, particularly on the African continent.

The establishment of UNOMSIL, consisting of military observers, a well-equipped medical unit and civilian support staff, should help in the monitoring of several aspects of the military and security situation in Sierra Leone, including, in particular, the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants.

My delegation welcomes very much the establishment of UNOMSIL and wishes it success in carrying out its mandate on behalf of the subregion and the international community as a whole. It is important, however, to emphasize that the success of UNOMSIL will depend to a large extent on continued close cooperation and mutual support between UNOMSIL and ECOMOG. Such cooperation and support would undoubtedly encourage greater and successful collaboration not only between the United Nations and

ECOWAS, but also between the United Nations and other regional bodies.

The President(*interpretation from Russian*): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): Kenya joins the consensus on the draft resolution to establish the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). The draft resolution reaffirms the commitment of the United Nations and of the international community to the long-term maintenance of peace and security in Sierra Leone. We would also like to commend the delegation of the United Kingdom for coordinating negotiations on the text before us.

We also welcome the presence here today, in this Chamber, of our brothers from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), under whose umbrella the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) has done a commendable job in restoring the democratically elected Government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and in trying to finally bring about real peace in Sierra Leone.

In May 1997, Kenya and other members of the international community called on the members of the junta to step down in order to enable Sierra Leone to resume its rightful place among the community of nations. Even after being deposed, these former junta members have refused to lay down their arms and are committing unspeakable atrocities in the north and east of the country. These revenge killings, with no military or strategic value, have got to stop. We demand that they lay down their arms and let Sierra Leoneans return to their lives in peace and harmony.

Sierra Leone would not be where it is today without the heroic and superb efforts of ECOMOG. We are therefore happy to note that this draft resolution recognizes, and indeed commends, its positive role and calls on the international community to provide more logistical and financial assistance to assist its efforts. It is encouraging to note that it has been receiving such help from some members of the international community. We know that more can be done. In a period of diminishing resources and fatigue from helping others, this is a truly honourable cause and worth every single penny.

Kenya welcomes the establishment of UNOMSIL as a step in the right direction and will continue to support the efforts of Mr. Francis Okelo, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone. We stand ready, as always, to contribute military officers and civilian police to enable the United Nations to achieve its objective of maintaining international peace and security. We also commend the Secretary-General for convening a high-level conference on Sierra Leone at the end of this month, which we believe will mobilize international support for Sierra Leone as it searches for concrete solutions to its problems in this peace-building process.

The military problems posed by the rebels are compounded even further by cross-border arms flows and support to those rebels. In this regard, the expression of serious concern contained in the draft resolution meets Kenya's demand that the parties concerned immediately stop these activities, while the draft also reaffirms the obligations of all States to comply strictly with the terms of the arms embargo in place.

While it is inappropriate to point fingers at any State, we must urgently appeal to all profiteers to stop this evil trade that is increasing the senseless loss of lives in Sierra Leone. In fact, these arms in the hands of rebels have made the humanitarian problems in Sierra Leone even more complex. Whereas in earlier days humanitarian agencies would have been focused on issues such as the supply of food and medicine, they are now engaged in complex medical procedures, including the replacement of limbs, as well as providing psychological assistance to address the traumatic effects of atrocities committed against innocent victims.

It is for these reasons that we welcome the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone to coordinate an effective national response to the needs of children affected by armed conflict. We are happy to note that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict, Ambassador Olara Otunnu, intends to make Sierra Leone one of the pilot projects for a more concerted response to the needs of children in a post-conflict setting. Against this background, we hope that we can enhance our support of his missions, including through the provision of adequate financial resources, to achieve these objectives.

In conclusion, as Sierra Leone begins a new journey in reviving its nation, as it did on 27 April 1961, when it attained its independence, the objective of national reconciliation must always be at the heart of all activities. We are encouraged to note that the Government of Sierra Leone continues to reach out in this regard, and we encourage it to do more, because therein lies the

foundation of long-lasting peace and stability for that great nation.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): There is a bitter irony about the present predicament of Sierra Leone. The country began to descend into a spiral of senseless violence, power struggles, coups and counter-coups in March 1991, when a motley group of fighters calling themselves the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) entered eastern Sierra Leone at Koindu and at the Mano River bridge. This invasion came on the heels of the decision of the Government of Sierra Leone to participate actively in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeeping operation in neighbouring Liberia. Sierra Leone has thus paid dearly for taking seriously and responsibly its commitments and obligations to regional stability.

The latest in a series of coups took place in May 1997, when mutinous elements within the military overthrew the new democratically elected Government and joined forces with the RUF. That development threw Sierra Leone into chaos and has constituted a threat to peace and security in the region. It is therefore incumbent on the Security Council in this crucial period to go beyond the actions it took in resolutions 1132 (1997) and 1171 (1998).

The draft resolution put before the Security Council for action today represents an appropriate response. It addresses the complexity of the problems facing the restored democratic Government of President Kabbah, and it complements the political and military assistance of ECOMOG, the Monitoring Group of ECOWAS, in the effort to restore peace and normalcy in Sierra Leone.

Slovenia will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution by which the Security Council decides to establish a United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) for an initial period of six months. We agree that the presence of United Nations military observers, civilian police and human rights monitors will represent a real contribution in the effort to stabilize the situation and create conditions of durable peace in Sierra Leone.

One of the issues high on the agenda is disarmament and demobilization. The reinstated Government inherits a country with no functioning army but a large number of fragmented armed elements. On the one hand, there are the remnants of the military junta and the RUF, and, on the other, there are the members of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF). The likelihood of further conflict will remain high unless real progress can be made to disarm and demobilize the combatants. In this context, Slovenia condemns the continued resistance of the deposed junta and the RUF, and joins the other members of the Security Council in demanding that they lay down their arms immediately.

Equally important is the question of reconciliation and reintegration. This is a sensitive issue, especially in the light of the numerous child soldiers who have been forcibly recruited by the RUF. In order to ensure the loyalty of these young children, the RUF elements often force them to brutalize or murder their own families, thus destroying the bonds of trust between children and their communities. A genuine, long-term process of reconciliation is needed to pull these children back into society. Slovenia therefore welcomes the efforts to make Sierra Leone one of the pilot projects for a more concerted and effective response to the post-conflict needs of children.

Despite all the destruction and mayhem, Sierra Leone is still a richly endowed country. Indeed, the green in the Sierra Leonean tricolour stands for the country's ample natural resources. But Sierra Leone's most important asset is the fact that it is a nation in which the indigenous ethnic groups share broadly similar cultures. There is no religious strife, and intermarriage is common. The ethnic groups of the country have preserved peace among them in the period of the rule of the junta. Moreover, the people of Sierra Leone demonstrated at the February and March 1996 elections their strong support for democratic rule and the ability to use democratic means, which guarantee the legitimacy of political power.

In this context, it is also important to note that Sierra Leone is not suffering a civil war. The RUF has no viable political support or even an identifiable constituency, which is why it has in the past refused repeated invitations to join the political process. Together with the remnants of the military junta, it now constitutes an amorphous formation which has no clear leadership structure. The violence against the civilian population in Sierra Leone, as horrible as it is, has therefore not undermined the foundations of the country.

Sierra Leone possesses all the prerequisites for a successful nation. What is required is that Sierra Leoneans draw upon their strengths and that the international community help them in their efforts. Slovenia is therefore encouraged by the ability of the

Security Council to act today unanimously. The degree of unity among Council members will undoubtedly contribute to the process of success of UNOMSIL's mission to help the people of Sierra Leone forge a secure future for themselves and for their children.

Mr. Konishi (Japan): Japan attaches great importance to the positive role of the United Nations in restoring peace and stability and in enhancing the protection of human rights in Sierra Leone following the reinstatement of the legitimate Government of President Kabbah in March. On behalf of the Japanese delegation, I should like to express my particular appreciation in this regard to Mr. Francis Okelo, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. I wish also to commend the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) for their efforts to restore peace and security in West Africa.

Having said that, I must also express the profound concern of the Government of Japan at the continued resistance by the remnants of the ousted junta and members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the serious violations of international humanitarian law which they are committing against the civilian population of Sierra Leone. Reports of the violation of the human rights of children are especially disturbing, particularly since the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara Otunnu, recently recommended that Sierra Leone be the focus of a pilot project responding to the needs of children.

It is important that soldiers relinquish their weapons and be reintegrated into society. Indeed, the process of disarmament and demobilization being pursued by the Government of Sierra Leone towards that end is essential not only for the restoration of peace and security but also for the economic and social recovery and development of Sierra Leone.

Japan's support for the draft resolution before us is based on its understanding that the role of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) is to monitor the disarmament and demobilization process on behalf of the Sierra Leone Government and ECOMOG, as well as to provide the necessary support for the maintenance of peace and security in the region. We believe that UNOMSIL, building upon the work of Special Envoy Okelo and in coordination with ECOMOG, will provide the most effective means of fostering the normalization of the situation in that country. We would also welcome the deployment of ECOMOG to monitor the border area between Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Finally, let me say a word about the deplorable delay in the delivery of humanitarian assistance in the face of the increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, due to the deterioration of the security situation in the country. Japan, for its part, has responded to the flash appeal by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), contributing as much as it can to help alleviate this situation. We strongly hope that humanitarian relief activities can be carried out effectively in the coming rainy season so that a further deterioration of the situation can be avoided.

Japan also welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to convene a special conference on 30 July to assist in the reconstruction and rehabilitation process in Sierra Leone. Japan is ready to take an active part in that conference.

The people of Sierra Leone have suffered severe hardships for far too long. Japan sincerely hopes that their suffering will be alleviated and that they can soon begin to enjoy the fruits of peace and development.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): This is the second time that my delegation has taken part in a meeting of the Security Council to establish a peacekeeping mission. We are particularly pleased to be approving this mission to Sierra Leone in view of the fact that that country, after confronting a chaotic situation, has embarked on the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction with the assistance of the international community.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the importance Costa Rica attaches to the role played by the Council in the transition towards peace and in the peace-building process. We are particularly pleased, therefore, to note that this has been the orientation of the new missions we have approved this year.

The people of Sierra Leone have come a long way since the military coup of 25 May 1997. We welcomed the report on the swift progress achieved by the Government of Sierra Leone in establishing constitutional order and all of the efforts made to promote national reconciliation. This case can serve as a model for many of the initiatives and activities that are under way.

First, my country firmly believes in the importance of regional and subregional organizations. In this case, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has played a crucial role, and the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) continues to be the body entrusted with monitoring security and maintaining stability in Sierra Leone. My country supports all the initiatives designed to strengthen the links between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations in all areas, as well as the establishment of direct and steady information channels.

Secondly, Costa Rica supported the lifting of the sanctions imposed under resolution 1132 (1997) when conditions were appropriate. This demonstrated that sanctions have a specific application and that they should not be permanent. The change that was effected through the adoption of resolution 1171 (1998) serves to demonstrate that this mechanism can be used solely in order to punish those who fail to comply with the resolutions of the Council and threaten international peace and security.

Thirdly, Costa Rica supports the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) for an initial period of six months to monitor security throughout the country and assist the Government and ECOMOG in disarmament and demobilization activities, to monitor the demobilization of former combatants, to monitor compliance with international humanitarian law and to observe security conditions in various areas of the country. This operation, which will be under the authority of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, will depend upon civilian components whose functions Costa Rica considers to be very important. The preparation of an effective police force is vital for the maintenance of security in Sierra Leone, which is why the component designed to support such an effort is indispensable.

The other civilian component forming part of the mission will deal with human rights, and Costa Rica considers this to be vital. The reports about attacks on the civilian population by rebel forces, especially in the north of the country, are extremely worrying. The numbers reported of civilians who have been attacked, mutilated or raped, and the number of deaths, continue to be extremely high. For my delegation, this is the main problem that must be considered and resolved immediately. In this context, my delegation agrees with the view expressed in the report of the Secretary-General that these actions must be documented so that we can combat impunity. We also support the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the human rights component of the office of the Special Envoy be enhanced, that it form part of the mission and, furthermore, as indicated in the draft resolution before us, that it help the Government of Sierra Leone enhance its human rights institutions.

In conclusion, I should like to express my country's concern about the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons in Sierra Leone. Every day an increasing number of civilians flee to camps in Guinea and Liberia and the number of refugees increases. According to reports of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, as many as 300 people set off for Guinea every day to seek refuge, and it has been calculated that 150,000 people have already sought refuge in Guinea and Liberia. Internally, the number of displaced persons has reached a figure of more than 30,000. We hope that the efforts of the international community and humanitarian aid agencies will help reduce these alarming figures.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Since last March, President Kabbah and the Government of Sierra Leone have adopted a series of effective measures to stabilize the general situation in that country. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) has played a positive role in this, and the Chinese delegation expresses its appreciation to it. However, the situation in Sierra Leone has not been fully stabilized. Some armed rebels from the former military junta are continuing to resist and to carry out atrocities against the civilian population. There are also signs that certain elements in Liberia are involved in the rebel activities against the Government of Sierra Leone. The Government of China expresses deep concern about this matter and hopes that it will receive the attention of the international community.

In response to the request of the Government of Sierra Leone and other African countries concerned, the United Nations will dispatch an observer mission to Sierra Leone to assist the host Government and ECOMOG to restore stability in Sierra Leone and facilitate national reconciliation. This is the second time in recent years that the Security Council has deployed a peacekeeping mission in Africa, which demonstrates the will of the international community actively to support and assist the African countries in bringing about peace and stability. We believe that the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) will be conducive to the stability of Sierra

Leone and the surrounding region and that it will also facilitate the swifter achievement of national reconciliation and the beginning of economic reconstruction.

The Government of China therefore supports the establishment of UNOMSIL and will give positive consideration to the dispatch of military observers to the mission. We hope that the Secretariat will work with the host Government and ECOMOG to finalize the arrangements at an early date so as to ensure the safety of military observers and other personnel of the Observer Mission. We also hope that UNOMSIL will take full account of the opinion of the Government of Sierra Leone, fully respect its sovereignty and cooperate well with ECOMOG.

China will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Al-Dosari (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the detailed and extensive report in document S/1998/486. I would be remiss not to express our thanks to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, to the United Nations staff in Sierra Leone and to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) for their commendable efforts to restore peace and stability to Sierra Leone.

The report refers to many positive steps undertaken by the Government of Sierra Leone following the reinstatement of the elected President, Mr. Kabbah. However, there have been many repercussions, and many problems must be dealt with, such as fostering peace and stability in the country and disarming the former supporters of the junta, who are still attacking innocent, defenceless civilians — displacing them, endangering their lives, violating their rights and committing atrocities against them. My delegation condemns these atrocities, which jeopardize the peace and stability of the country and impede the achievement of national reconciliation.

Given the current security and social situation in Sierra Leone, my delegation hopes that the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) will contribute to peace and security in the country in particular and in the region in general. The task of the Mission will complement that of ECOMOG. That is why my delegation underlines the importance of close coordination between the two missions. We also call upon all the parties concerned to guarantee the safety and security of the members of the Mission and to protect its property so that it will be able to achieve the desired objectives.

We also welcome the decision of the Secretary-General to convene a high-level special political conference to mobilize resources for peacekeeping activities, emergency humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and rehabilitation in Sierra Leone.

In light of all this, my delegation will join the consensus on the draft resolution before us.

Mr. Dangue Réwaka (Gabon) (*interpretation from French*): The efforts made by the Economic Community of West African States, through its Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), to re-establish constitutional legality and restore peace in Sierra Leone deserve to be not only welcomed, but also supported by the international community. Indeed, these efforts have allowed the democratically elected Government to undertake action, in particular, to reorganize its administration and launch national reconciliation.

The tangible and commendable contribution of the Secretary-General, embodied in the dispatch of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone, will rightly help to achieve the goals of peace and reconstruction in Sierra Leone. The full achievement of these objectives naturally includes monitoring the military and security situation, disarmament, demobilization, and respect for international humanitarian law.

For all these reasons, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution establishing UNOMSIL.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): Today's decision to establish the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) is an important contribution of the international community to the process of peace and reconciliation in Sierra Leone. My country gives special importance to the fact that, in addition to monitoring the military and security situation and the process of disarmament and demobilization, the mandate also includes monitoring respect for international humanitarian law and human rights.

UNOMSIL will continue and strengthen the important work of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francis Okelo, and his colleagues, whose devoted efforts I would like to take this opportunity to commend.

The strongest imperative now for Sierra Leone is of course the cessation of hostilities, followed by disarmament and demobilization. Equally important, however, is the need for a wider perspective on how to reach a long-term solution. The emphasis given in the draft resolution to the need to engage in a genuine process of national reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation is therefore essential and thus also seeks to address the fundamental causes of the conflict. The Government of Sierra Leone should be commended for the actions taken in this field, aimed at stabilizing the country and strengthening democratic institutions.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has played an important role in the process towards peace in Sierra Leone. Its Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) should be encouraged to coordinate its efforts with UNOMSIL. The joint efforts of the United Nations and ECOMOG, as a subregional organization, are well in line with the overall ambition of the international community to support and strengthen African peacekeeping capacity.

The continued resistance to the legitimate Government and the violence perpetrated against the civilian population by members of the Revolutionary United Front and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council are unacceptable. Sweden strongly condemns the atrocities committed against the civilian population by the rebels. We urge all parties involved to respect human rights and international humanitarian law.

There is also continuing concern about the political instability in the region as a whole. The recent meeting between the Presidents of Sierra Leone and Liberia on 2 July was, however, a positive step. We also welcome the constructive cooperation of the Liberian Government in supporting the possible deployment of military observers along the border between the two countries.

The importance of coordinated and comprehensive action cannot be overestimated. Although the responsibility lies primarily with the Government of Sierra Leone, the international community also has a vital role.

Bearing in mind the grave humanitarian situation, Sweden welcomes the humanitarian efforts made by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other organizations, despite the limited financial resources made available to date. In this context, I would like to mention that, in June, Sweden decided to contribute approximately $1 million to support UNHCR in assisting Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea (Conakry) and Liberia, in addition to our previous contributions to humanitarian efforts in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): The difficulties experienced by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in stemming the activities of the rebellion and members of the former military junta in Sierra Leone show that the situation there remains fragile and that the progress that has been achieved remains threatened. These uncertainties should not prevent us, however, from welcoming the re-establishment of the constitutional Government of Sierra Leone or from being gratified by its manifest intentions to undertake reform, especially regarding the state of law and the restructuring of the State.

The presence of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) should help to stabilize the situation and allow the legal authorities of Sierra Leone to consolidate their authority. We were therefore particularly pleased by the initiatives undertaken by several members of the Council to establish, organize and gain approval for the Observer Mission. This will be the second new operation to be created in three months by the Security Council in Africa. In this decision, we see proof of the interest of the Security Council and the international community in assisting Africa to prevent and settle crises.

The establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone allows both the military and civilian dimensions of the conflict to be addressed. The diversity of the tasks assigned to the Mission reflects these aspirations. These include monitoring the programme for demobilizing and reintegrating former combatants; assisting in monitoring respect for international humanitarian law, as was just emphasized by the Ambassador of Sweden; monitoring the programme to restructure the police force; and providing technical assistance to help the Government of Sierra Leone to cope with the needs of the country in the field of human rights.

UNOMSIL is also an interesting, promising and potentially fruitful experiment in coordination between a regional operation — that of ECOMOG on behalf of ECOWAS — and a United Nations operation. We welcome the important contribution this experiment will

make to stabilization in that country. UNOMSIL's success will therefore depend on tangible cooperation between the two missions: the primary mission of ECOMOG and the complementary one of UNOMSIL. Once again, however, this cooperation must be along the desired lines between the United Nations and the regional organizations in which we place our trust.

UNOMSIL falls within the political framework of genuine national reconciliation. Once again, we are gratified by the intentions expressed by the Government of Sierra Leone in this respect. We therefore hope that UNOMSIL will be able to support all initiatives, in particular those of the Government, to restore the democratic process and to speed up Sierra Leone's reconstruction and recovery.

Mr. Soares (Portugal): I would like to start by saying that Portugal concurs fully with the statement just made by the representative of the Presidency of the European Union.

The consequences of the conflict in Sierra Leone and what seems currently to be the gradual emergence of a post-conflict situation require a coordinated response both from the international community and from the legitimate Government of that State. Without political will in Sierra Leone to overcome the current political and economic challenges, the consolidation of peace will remain illusory; but the same could be said if the international community failed to provide credible assistance to the people of Sierra Leone.

In this regard, Portugal commends the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone to re-establish the democratic process and to promote the tasks of national reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation. We welcome in particular the recent adoption by President Kabbah of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan.

Our delegation attaches special importance to the provisions of the draft resolution before the Council which emphasize the need to promote national reconciliation. We also join others in demanding not only that the remnants of the ousted junta and members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) lay down their arms immediately, but also that all forces and factions in Sierra Leone respect human rights and strictly abide by the rules of international humanitarian law. Full adherence to the arms embargo imposed by resolution 1171 (1998), in particular by neighbouring countries, would also be instrumental for the stabilization of Sierra Leone.

In this context, the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) will also be a meaningful step in the right direction. Its carefully designed mandate is quite clear and has to be fully respected by all relevant actors in this process. We welcome the commitment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to ensure the security of United Nations personnel, and we hope that the necessary security arrangements can be concluded before UNOMSIL observers are actually sent to Sierra Leone.

Portugal also underlines the importance of paragraph 14 of the draft resolution, which welcomes the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone to coordinate a national response to the needs of children affected by armed conflict, as well as the recommendation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict that Sierra Leone be made a pilot project in the context of post-conflict peace-building. The open debate on this issue which took place in this Chamber last month under the Portuguese presidency and the subsequent adoption of the presidential statement of 29 June 1998 demonstrate the particular importance the Council attaches to this theme.

For the reasons just stated, Portugal will support the draft resolution before the Council.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): For the fourth time this year the Security Council is meeting to adopt a draft resolution on the situation in Sierra Leone. Immediately after President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was restored to his constitutional mandate, the Council adopted, on 16 March, resolution 1156 (1998), which lifted the embargo on petroleum products established by resolution 1132 (1997).

Unfortunately, however, the reinstatement of the legitimate President was not followed by peace. Criminal resistance by members of the former junta and their allies in the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has continued to impose suffering on the Sierra Leonean people.

On 17 April the Council adopted resolution 1162 (1998), which sent to the area a group of 10 military liaison officers to strengthen the office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and to cooperate with the Government and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). And on 5 June, resolution 1171 (1998) decided that the arms embargo would apply only to the rebel forces. Notwithstanding all this, resistance

continues in certain areas, and human suffering has not abated in the regions where the combat is taking place. The RUF continues to kill, maim and destroy, causing a flow of refugees to Liberia and Guinea.

At the same time we note that the Secretary-General has informed the Council that in some aspects the situation has improved considerably. We should now adopt a draft resolution that will establish the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) with a comprehensive mandate that we hope will assist in an effective way the task of promoting reconciliation, assist ECOWAS to end the fighting and help the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan agreed among the Government of Sierra Leone, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and other donors.

Very important are the human-rights and police components of UNOMSIL. The observance of humanitarian law is a precondition for durable peace. To uphold human rights is a requisite for a functioning democracy. The destruction caused by the junta and its allies will need to be addressed. It is our hope that the special United Nations conference on Sierra Leone will help to provide the much needed increase in assistance to that country.

The humanitarian situation and the plight of children that have been pressed into armed bands require continued attention. I wish to commend Ambassador Olara Otunnu, Under-Secretary-General Vieira de Mello and Mr. Francis Okelo for their important role in the efforts to cope with this grave situation.

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): Let me at the outset express my delegation's gratitude to the delegation of the United Kingdom for the timely initiative taken to come up with the draft resolution before us, geared towards the establishment of a United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). Such a mission, in our view, will complement the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). It will be seen as a mutually reinforcing partnership in the implementation of the plan for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

While not wishing to blow our own trumpet, we have to admit that ECOMOG has been playing its peacekeeping role in a manner that deserves not only praise but also our continued support in the form of logistics and material supplies. In this context, we would like to thank the United States and all other countries which have been helping ECOMOG in one way or another. This is all the more necessary as there is still some resistance in certain parts of the country by elements of the misguided erstwhile junta and the notorious Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in their unholy alliance to continue to wreak maximum havoc.

Against this background, and considering that UNOMSIL will not have a force of its own, the success of the Mission will depend to a large extent on the strength of ECOMOG both quantitatively and qualitatively. In fact, UNOMSIL will be deployed to secure areas only and it is ECOMOG which will provide the much-needed security.

That said, the fact remains that the establishment of UNOMSIL is a welcome development that should serve as a moral boost for the Government of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the people of Sierra Leone. We note with appreciation the efforts being made by the Government of Sierra Leone to consolidate its authority throughout the country to the extent possible, at the same time pursuing the important and difficult task of national reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

It is our fervent hope that the convening of a high-level conference to mobilize assistance for Sierra Leone will send the right signals to all Sierra Leoneans to speed up the process of national reconciliation. This does not exclude either the RUF rebels or the remnants of the ousted junta, who should now seize the opportunity offered to them to lay down their arms honourably, and to contribute constructively to the rebirth of their nation.

My delegation would also like to hail, as another moral boost, the mini-summit held recently in Abuja at the initiative of the Secretary-General, bringing together President Taylor and President Kabbah. We would like to commend the Secretary-General and the new Nigerian leadership for convening such an important meeting, which will no doubt strengthen confidence-building measures between the two neighbouring countries. It is gratifying to note that the non-aggression pact within the framework of the Mano River Union was evoked during the Abuja meeting.

All these developments augur well for the Observer Mission that we are about to establish in Sierra Leone. My delegation will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): The international community has watched in horror as the situation in Sierra Leone has deteriorated. The ray of hope that we all felt when President Kabbah and his Government returned to Freetown in March was quickly overshadowed by the terrible atrocities committed by fleeing junta and rebel forces. We are extremely concerned by continuing fighting in the countryside, the massacres and maiming of civilians, reports of weapons flowing over the border to the rebels and the large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. The humanitarian situation urgently calls for our attention and resources to address the multiple needs for food, shelter and medical care. The United States will contribute over $55 million in assistance to Sierra Leone and refugees in neighbouring countries. More is needed from the international community; we will do our part.

In this human tragedy, the Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOMOG) carries the hopes of all the people of Sierra Leone who wish to live in peace under a democratic Government. ECOMOG has performed admirably in its efforts to provide security for the Government and the people of Sierra Leone. Adequate security is essential for humanitarian assistance, disarmament, demobilization, national reconciliation and development to be successful. We commend the leading role that the Economic Community of West African States, especially those countries that have contributed troops to ECOMOG, has taken to help a neighbour restore democratic order and regain basic security.

However, ECOMOG faces a bigger challenge than anyone expected, and it needs our help. ECOMOG must have additional troops, better transport and greater logistical support to continue to protect civilians from the ravages of the rebels and the former junta. We urge all the friends of Sierra Leone to assist ECOMOG as it continues to support the crucial task of re-establishing security to a fragile State.

Today's draft resolution is a vital part of that assistance. The United Nations military observers we are authorizing will augment ECOMOG by monitoring the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants, assessing the security situation and reporting on both military operations and human rights. The presence of United Nations observers should build confidence in the demobilization process. That process will be limited at first, given the current security situation, but the draft resolution provides flexibility in the deployment of the observers. As ECOMOG expands new secure zones, demobilization can take place in those areas of the country.

The relationship between ECOMOG and the United Nations observers will be cooperative, as it was in Liberia. We hope the Secretary-General will quickly conclude the status of mission agreements with the Government of Sierra Leone and the Economic Community of West African States. We applaud ECOMOG's commitment to partnership and protection of the United Nations Observer Mission.

This draft resolution reinforces our serious concern at reports of cross-border arms flows and support to the rebels in Sierra Leone, and it reiterates the arms embargo that the Council first authorized last October. The neighbouring States have responsibility for implementing that embargo. We welcome the Secretary-General's personal engagement on this issue, and were pleased by the meetings between Presidents Taylor and Kabbah in Abuja on 1-2 July. We join Presidents Taylor, Kabbah and Abubakar and Secretary-General Annan in deploring the atrocities carried out in Sierra Leone. Those responsible for such acts should be brought to justice. We demand an immediate halt to outside support to the rebels and former junta, from whatever source.

The United States has reservations about the proposal for border monitors under current circumstances. Preventing cross-border arms flows is a worthy idea. The unfortunate reality is that ECOMOG is already overstretched and does not have the capability to take on this responsibility. We believe the current priority should be to channel additional support for ECOMOG into its central function of providing security in Sierra Leone rather than monitoring the border or providing security for other monitors.

The draft resolution highlights the role of the Secretary-General's Special Representative in coordinating United Nations programmes in Sierra Leone. The Special Representative and his staff will advise the Government of Sierra Leone on the reform and restructuring of the police force and on human rights and international humanitarian law. We support the efforts of the Sierra Leone Government and the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict to make Sierra Leone a pilot project for addressing the needs of children in post-conflict peace-building.

As the Secretary-General's report on conflict in Africa outlined so well, coordination and planning among a variety of agencies and entities is critical to the success of conflict resolution and peace-building efforts. We hope that the successful model of international coordination among the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States, regional States, non-governmental organizations and the donor community that assisted Liberia in its election and democratic transition last year will be further developed for Sierra Leone.

We welcome the United Nations plans to hold a special high-level conference on Sierra Leone later this month to coordinate planning for peace and security, support for ECOMOG and humanitarian assistance. We expect that significant steps will be taken at that conference towards addressing the many urgent needs in Sierra Leone.

The President (*interpretation from Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Russian Federation.

Russia has repeatedly expressed its deep concern regarding the crisis in Sierra Leone. While firmly condemning the rebels, we have supported the demands of the African countries and the international community to restore constitutional order. Following the restoration of the legitimate Government in Sierra Leone, remnants of the deposed military junta continue to follow the path of military resistance. We condemn the inhumane acts of violence perpetrated against the civilian population and demand their immediate cessation.

The legitimate Government of Sierra Leone is now faced with the tasks of restoring peace and security, effective governance, developing the democratic process, reconstruction and restoration and, particularly important, achieving national reconciliation.

The draft resolution before us today attests to the importance the Security Council attaches to the restoration of peace and security in Sierra Leone and to the impact of the situation in that country on the situation in the subregion. The deployment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone, to be authorized by the Security Council, is an example of the strengthening of the coordination of actions between the United Nations and the regional and subregional organizations on peacekeeping issues, in particular between the Security Council and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which is making a significant contribution to the normalization of the situation in Sierra Leone.

A guarantee for the success of the new United Nations Mission is its comprehensive cooperation and close coordination with the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). It is extremely important that the tasks assigned to the Mission be linked to the concrete objectives of the Government of Sierra Leone for the restoration of peace and stability in the country.

Russia stands ready to participate actively in the work of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone, and in particular to provide it with military observers.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution (S/1998/620) before it. If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bahrain, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, France, Gabon, Gambia, Japan, Kenya, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*interpretation from Russian*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1181 (1998).

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.3903

Security Council

Fifty-third Year

Provisional

3903rd Meeting
Monday, 13 July 1998, 10.45 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Costa Rica	Mr. Niehaus
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue Réwaka
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Japan	Mr. Konishi
	Kenya	Ms. Mohamed
	Portugal	Mr. Soares
	Slovenia	Mr. Lenarčič
	Sweden	Mr. Lidén
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Gomersall
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

Letter dated 29 June 1998 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/581)

Letter dated 25 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/1998/582)

Letter dated 25 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/1998/583)

98-85582 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 29 June 1998 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/581)

Letter dated 25 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/1998/582)

Letter dated 25 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/1998/583)

The President (*interpretation from Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Monga Mulenda Niakonga (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Mr. Kayinamura (Rwanda) took seats at the Council table.

The President (*interpretation from Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the following documents: S/1998/581, which contains the text of a letter dated 29 June 1998 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the report of the Secretary-General's Investigative Team charged with investigating serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; S/1998/582, letter dated 25 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; and S/1998/583, letter dated 25 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council condemns the massacres, other atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law committed in Zaire/Democratic Republic of the Congo, and especially its eastern provinces, including crimes against humanity and those other violations described in the report of the Secretary-General's Investigative Team (S/1998/581). It notes the responses to the report provided by the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/1998/582) and Rwanda (S/1998/583). It recognizes the work of the Investigative Team in documenting some of these violations, in spite of the fact that the Team was not allowed to carry out its mission fully and without hindrance.

"The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the Great Lakes region.

"The Security Council recognizes the necessity to investigate further the massacres, other atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law and to prosecute those responsible. It deplores the delay in the administration of justice. The Council calls on the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to investigate without delay, in their respective countries, the allegations contained in the report of the Investigative Team and to bring to justice any persons found to have been involved in these or other massacres, atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law. The Council takes note of the stated willingness of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to try any of its nationals who are guilty of or were implicated in the alleged massacres (S/1998/582). Such action is of great importance in helping to bring an end to impunity and to foster lasting peace and stability in the region. It urges Member States to cooperate with the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in the investigation and prosecution of these persons.

"The Council encourages the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to seek international assistance, such as technical assistance, as needed, in this process. It also invites the Governments concerned to consider the inclusion of international observers, as appropriate. It requests the Governments concerned to provide an initial progress report to the Secretary-General by 15 October 1998 on the steps being taken to investigate and prosecute those responsible.

"The Security Council expresses its readiness to consider, as necessary in light of actions by the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, additional steps to ensure that the perpetrators of the massacres, other atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law are brought to justice.

"The Security Council urges Member States, relevant United Nations bodies and agencies and other international agencies to provide the necessary technical and other assistance, as requested, to the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in the development of independent and impartial judicial systems.

"The Security Council expresses support for United Nations and other international activities to reduce ethnic tensions and promote national reconciliation in the region, and encourages the Governments concerned to continue to cooperate in these activities to bring about a real improvement in the situation.

"The Security Council attaches great importance to the role of the Organization of African Unity and welcomes its decision to establish the International Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the Genocide in Rwanda and the Surrounding Events (S/1998/461). It appeals to Member States to contribute to the Special Trust Fund established to support the work of the Panel.

"The Security Council will remain actively seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1998/20.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.05 p.m.